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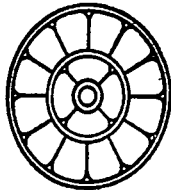
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

AN APPEAL TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

Mother India has again to call for financial help. Our last appeal brought a very good response and we are deeply thankful. Costs have been steadily rising in everything. Our immediate need was to stock paper. We have paid a further Rs. 4,000. This has made a new gap in our resources. So we badly require donations of any amount that can be spared by our well-wishers.

The scheme of Life-Membership is still in force. If attended to, it can also help.

Advertisements too can be a good contribution. Tariff cards can be had on application.

Increase in the number of subscribers is always welcome.

We shall be grateful for help in any form, and particularly in the form of donations.

The donations will be taxfree if sent ear-marked for us through the Ashram Trust.

AN EXPLANATION TO OUR WELL-WISHERS

The good number of our advertisements must not be taken as a sign of great gain. We pay a very large commission on several of them, and after deducting press-charges our profit is small on the whole.

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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FEBRUARY 21

A LOOK BEHIND AND AHEAD

ON ONE 21ST of February in the late 1950's I repeated to the Mother the usual English formula for a birthday: "Many happy returns." Immediately, half jocular half serious, she exclaimed: "What! You want me to return again and again to the earth still further? Haven't I had enough of being born so far?"

I was taken quite unawares by such a response. I mumbled something like: "No, Mother, I don't at all wish you a re-birth. I have only used the customary words meaning that you should enjoy numerous future birthdays in this very life." She answered: "That's all right." But her response set me thinking.

My first thought was of her own statement made a little earlier in that decade: "Since the beginning of the earth, wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of consciousness, I was there." Then it struck me that though the work done each time had been glorious the labour must have been heavy and that the need to carry on this illuminating toil from age to age must have taxed the human embodiments for it grievously. The Mother must have passed through her frequent births with a graceful heroism but there could be no denying the fact that for the sake of the world's uplift she repeatedly

Assaults of Hell endured and Titan strokes
And bore the fierce inner wounds that are slow to heal.¹

In the wake of this second thought followed the sense that the Mother was carrying even in her present embodiment a tremendous burden which she did not want to recur in another incarnation—a burden she wished to dispose of by a supreme victory. The victory was, of course, for the earth's good. Like Sri Aurobindo who once said that the mighty task he had undertaken was not for himself since he did not require either liberation or supramentalisation, the Mother as the Avatar of the Highest Divinity had nothing to accomplish for her own sake: she had shouldered the luminous load of the Integral Yoga in order to lighten humanity's evolutionary travail. But the load was immense and such as nobody else could endure and it had become greater after the passing of Sri Aurobindo: now the concentration of the Supermind's transformative pressure was wholly on the Mother's body.

Sri Aurobindo has well summed up the Avatar's situation: "It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness towards the Divine. The Gallio-like 'Je m'en fiche'-ism ('I do not care') would not carry me one step; it would certainly not be divine. It is quite another thing that enables

¹ Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* (Centenary Edition, 1972), p. 230.

me to walk unweeping and unlamenting towards the goal" (April 1934).

Obviously, if her remark to me was to be fully understood, the Mother desired the Divine Love, which was sustaining her, to fulfil its aim of supramental descent and transformation in this very birth of hers: she had no inclination to write "To be continued" to the story of her present life. What is more, she did not think in terms even of her disciples being reborn for success. Not only to me did she say at one time: "When I speak of total realisation for any of you, I mean in this very life." Her vision is expressed to others also when Sri Aurobindo wrote to a sadhaka on 15 January 1934: "The Mother has never spoken of anything to be done in the next birth.... Naturally the vital has to be transformed if one is to succeed."

Yes, it was as she told me on one occasion: "Death is not in our programme." The Mother's birthday was meant to repeat year after year, with her work moving from strength to strength. In 1953 she expressed in general terms her vision as well as her will:

"The transformation of the material body has not been done nor even attempted perhaps in the past. It can be done only if life is sufficiently prolonged; you do not leave the body unless you will it so and thus have the necessary time at your disposal to bring about this change. Sri Aurobindo once said—and he said it without the least hesitation—that it would take about three hundred years to do it; I can add, from the time when the last stage of union with the Divine is reached....

"To prepare such a body three hundred years is nothing; even a thousand years will not be too much. Naturally, I am speaking of the same body. If you change your body in between, it will no longer be the same body. At 50 the body already begins to wear out. But, on the contrary, if you have a body that goes on perfecting itself, if each passing year represents a step in progress, then you can continue indefinitely...."

After the Supramental Manifestation on 29 February 1956 in the subtle-physical layer of the earth her hopes took a still more concrete shape. No doubt, she did not envisage a quick change in general world-conditions and said on 5 September of the same year: "Before the effects of the supramental manifestation become visible and tangible, perceptible to the whole world, thousands of years have perhaps to pass." However, she had a shorter view for the small world of sadhakas around her. On 10 October 1956 she declared: "What Sri Aurobindo has promised and what evidently interests us who are here now is that the time has come when some chosen beings out of the present-day humanity who fulfil the conditions of the necessary spiritualisation would be capable of transforming their body with the help of the Supramental Force, the Supramental Consciousness and the Supramental Light and would no longer be animal men but become supermen. This promise he based on the knowledge he had that the Supramental Force was about to break upon earth. In point of fact, the Supramental Force had come down into him long ago."

The meaning of the last statement about Sri Aurobindo is evidently, as she explained to Monsieur Roger Anger one day and later to me on 25 November 1970, that Sri Aurobindo's embodied being had experienced the Supermind's descent but that the Supramental Force had not entered sufficiently and permanently his physical substance so as to start supramentalising it. She told Roger that because the physical supramentalisation had not been there Sri Aurobindo's body could undergo death. To me she said: "Clearly, Sri Aurobindo did not have the supramental body, and neither do I have it. But that does not mean that the Supermind was not in his body. The two things are quite different. One can have the Supermind in the body without the body being supramentalised."

What applied to Sri Aurobindo in the past applied with some difference to the Mother in 1970. The Supermind had not only been in her body for a long time: the process of preparing the physical supramentalisation had also advanced further in her instance. Still, the exteriorising phenomenon was absent. The Mother never made claims for her own person. She did not say that her Yoga had perfected her body in the external sense of the word. Her body possessed certain qualities marking it out, it could transmit the inner divinity by a subtle ambiance which all sensitive disciples and sometimes even sheer outsiders felt. It had also an unusual stamina: up to her eighty-second year she could play tennis every afternoon for about an hour. But purely material shortcomings she never concealed and latterly there was an avowed drop in the health of particular organs or parts. However, on 25 November 1970 there was no impression on me that she had given up the goal of supramental transformation. After she had asked me how old I was and I had replied "Sixty-three years complete" and then added: "Mother, I want to hang on till I see your Victory", she at first looked a bit surprised at the tall order, but in a second she laughed and said, "Bien." This signified that the Victory—that is, total physical transformation—was accepted as possible, [if not certain, for her body in the long run.

Over a year and a half earlier—to be precise, on 15 February 1969—she had expressed, for the first time as far as I know, something less than certainty about the upshot of her lengthy spiritual endeavour. She said: "... the work is becoming more and more 'exacting'. But I feel (that is to say the body feels very well) that it is part of a training. It looks like that: it must hold on, the body, or otherwise, so much the worse, it will be for another time."¹ Here the closing phrase conceives the possibility of giving up the body and getting reborn: a passing through the experience of death is not ruled out. Yet the insistence is upon holding on and facing the test, the hard discipline of enduring the more and more difficult conditions under which the body lived in its attempt to assimilate the Supramental Force. Consciousness and Light directly into its cells.

The next occasion on which we hear of something less than certainty is, paradoxically, in the very talk of 24 March 1972 telling us her inner experience of

¹ *Bulletin*, April 1969, p. 897.

body altogether new", a subtle perfection of shape—"sexless... very white... very slim... pretty... truly a harmonious form".¹ She exclaims: "If that were to materialise..." Apparently, all was ready on the subtle-physical plane to precipitate itself in the gross; but the mode of precipitation, the technique for materialising the new body, was unknown. Feeling acutely the disparity between the waiting future perfection, so close yet so far, and the aspiring actuality, the Mother turned from the prospect of that glory, pointed to her partly handicapped frame and cried out: "Is that going to change? It must change or it has to follow the old ordinary process of undoing itself and remaking itself."²

The possibility of having to follow this process became an actuality on 17 November 1973. But this is a way of speaking from the ordinary outer point of view. The Avatar of the Supermind cannot be said to be compelled to any course by a necessity of Nature. Whatever course is adopted is freely accepted: the Supramental Consciousness belongs to the Transcendence and is above all cosmic conditions even when it elects to work under them. What determines its future is its own transcendent Knowledge and Will. A moment must have come of such Knowledge and Will in the first week of December 1950 to Sri Aurobindo; and the instrumental being, put in front for world-action, obeyed. A period of crisis must have preceded this moment. We can discern it distinctly in a letter of May 1949 in which Sri Aurobindo writes that "things are getting too serious" for him "to waste time" on "inconclusive intellectualities": he did not care for any distraction from his Yogic work. We see a similar crisis in the Mother's sadhana.

In 1972 she said: "It is becoming terrible. It is like a pressure, a frightful pressure to bring about the desired progress. I feel it in myself for my body. But my body is not afraid, it says: 'Very well, if I am to end, it is the end.' Every minute it is like that: the true thing or the end. The body knows that this is the way for the supramental body to be formed. It must be wholly under the influence of the Divine..."³ The formation of the supramental body: there is no mistaking the goal envisioned and sought. What was held in some doubt a few years earlier was simply whether the goal would be reached. In 1969 we get a glimpse of the sensitive situation. She states about her body's future: "(...as if the world put the question) Will it continue or will it get dissolved?... But the body knows that it has been decided, and that it is not to be told to the body. It accepts, it is not impatient, it accepts, it says, 'It is all right, it is as Thou wilt'...." Obviously, a little before 17 November 1973 the body must have been told the final decision of the Divine, the Mother's own highest transcendent self—a decision guided by the two factors which, according to Sri Aurobindo,⁴ alone matter in the Avatar's life and alone mould it: the Truth above which has to be manifested and the need of the world-play below.

¹ *Ibid.*, August 1972, p. 75.

² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³ *Ibid.*, April, p. 73.

⁴ *On Yoga II*, Tome One (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1958), pp. 414, 427.

As a result, there was on 17 November a clear phase of great distress in the body, a marked painful difficulty for quite a time in breathing, the usual accompaniment of a severe heart-attack. Every sign showed that she was letting the body suffer the final stage of the prolonged disorder she had undergone with the unobstructed entry of the immense Supermind-power into a representative body for the first time in all history. When the end came, the doctor who had been summoned gave an external heart-massage—but to no avail.

Once the definite departure from the body had been ascertained, the vehicle that had striven and suffered and achieved even more than Sri Aurobindo had done twenty-three years before was made ready to lie in state for the last darshan by those who had loved it. Not for long could it be kept. The Mother would seem to have got the utmost service out of it and willed that it should soon be put into the same Samadhi-vault which held the physical remains of the Master. Shortly after the body had been brought down from the Mother's room, rapid and extensive deterioration was observed. On 1 February 1969, in a series of questions and answers on death, when she had been asked "How can one tell for certain that the physical body is dead?" her reply was: "Only when it decomposes." Now no doubt could remain as to what she had allowed to happen.

This does not mean that the goal she had originally set up was anything else than physical supramentalisation. Up to almost the end she worked for it, just as Sri Aurobindo had done up to the eve of 5 December 1950. But even as he changed his course, so too did she—both of them for their own occult purposes.

Let us repeat that the Supramental Avatar, the Incarnation from the Transcendence, is not forced by any cosmic law: an utter freedom goes hand in hand with the play of its action. The Mother has hinted at this freedom several times. On 26 December, three weeks after Sri Aurobindo had passed away, she declared: "Our Lord has sacrificed himself totally for us. He was not compelled to leave his body, he chose to do so for reasons so sublime that they are beyond the reach of human mentality." On 2 April 1972 she said about herself: "The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am old—I am not old. I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitively to prepare the transformation." In the same talk she added: "If you believe that I am here because I am bound—it is not true. I am not bound..." On 30 August the same year we see again the supramental instrument and the Supramental Transcendent in their free relationship. "Very often, very often," she disclosed, "I ask the Lord: How can I help now that I can no more see clearly nor speak clearly? It is a state...the body does not feel the decline! It is convinced that if tomorrow the Lord wanted it to take up again its activities, it would be able to do so. The strength is there (*The Mother touches her arms, her muscles*), at times a mighty strength!...Why?...The condition is willed so that...I might be left quiet."

With her acceptance of an exit from the body, we hark back to the subject of 21 February, the day of the Mother's birth. And for this day the central question

is: "When will she be reborn?" She has unequivocally announced that Sri Aurobindo will not be born in the human manner again: his return will be in the first supramental body built in the supramental way—through the extraordinary power the human body's attainment of supramentalisation will win to bring about the entry of higher beings without the ordinary process of sex. About her own future, the Mother has not denied "another time" and a self-undoing and self-remaking as in the common run of human generation.

21 February is especially an occasion of spiritual spell-binding for me. My first darshan of the Mother side by side with Sri Aurobindo was on this date in 1928 when she was exactly at her half-century. And my last well-remembered darshan of her was also on 21 February in 1973. The April darshan is vague in my mind and on 2 May I left for Bombay for a cataract-operation. Owing to unavoidable circumstances the operation was long delayed. I had to miss the darshan of 15 August when the Mother was seen as an embodied divinity for the last time by the Ashramites. I returned to the Ashram on hearing in the early morning of 18 November that she had renounced her embodiment. On the preceding night she had appeared to me in a vivid dream, with a bunch of red roses which she had told me to put on my head.

Last year, on her birth-centenary there was a very strong experience of her coming extremely close to our physical space-time, as if she were on the verge of taking up a body once more. If on every birthday of hers we could feel with increasing strength her proximity to the earth-scene, one day in the near future the thin veil will be rent and her supreme sweetness and power, instead of guiding us invisibly, stand again intimate to our seeking gaze and eager touch.

K. D. SETHNA

VIOLENCE

EXTRACTS FROM A TALK OF THE MOTHER

VIOLENCE is necessary so long as men are dominated by their ego and its desires...

But violence should be used only as a means of self-defence if one is attacked. The ideal towards which humanity is moving and which we want to realise, is a state of luminous understanding in which the needs of each one and of the overall harmony are taken into account.

The future will have no need of violence, for it will be ruled by the divine Consciousness in which everything harmonises with and completes everything else....

You see, there is his idea of non-violence in India, which has replaced material violence by moral violence—but that is far worse!... Lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is a moral violence which can create more disturbances than physical violence....

I myself encouraged fencing a great deal because it gives a skill, a control of one's movements and a discipline in violence. At one time... I learned to shoot. I used to shoot with a pistol, I used to shoot with a rifle because that gives you a steadiness and skill and a sure-sightedness that is excellent, and it obliges you to stay calm in the midst of danger.... One must not be hopelessly non-violent—that makes characters that are...soft!... The methods of self-defence should be mastered, and for that they must be practised.

18 February 1973

THREE LITTLE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MOTHER

15 January 1962

SEHRA: Mother, did you read my letter mentioning the predictions made by astrologers about February?

MOTHER: Yes. Many people have asked me about these predictions. The astrologers say that something bad will happen. Even Punditji says so. Every time I hear all these things I try to see what the truth is. But always there is a blank. I see nothing. There is neither a Yes nor a No. This may mean that nothing is going to happen. Or else it may be the Supreme's Will that I should know nothing and not interfere with anything. Usually I don't interfere with happenings in Nautre.

SEHRA: But, Mother, aren't you and the Supreme the same?

MOTHER: Yes, and when I go into a trance I see everything. Even in the present case I must have seen everything, but when I come back into the outer consciousness I sometimes forget and there is a blank.

SEHRA: You mean you want to forget and so you don't remember.

MOTHER: You may put it like that if you wish. But when I am meant to interfere I clearly remember everything I see in my trance. For instance, I see the great threat of a World War, and I put all my force against it to prevent anything that may develop into a World War. Even lately I have done that.

SEHRA: I am asking you about the astrologers' predictions because it is said that half-of Bombay will be submerged in water. I feel very worried: my people are staying just opposite the beach in Bombay. Will the predictions come true?

MOTHER: Well, if anything bad threatens to happen, we'll see about it and prevent that also.

23 February 1962

MOTHER: Why were you so late? You are always in time here.

SEHRA: I was cooking for my guests.

MOTHER: Have you come straight from your cooking?

SEHRA: Yes.

MOTHER: Oh, that's why I have such a delicious smell. You must have prepared something very nice. It is so nice that I would like to eat it. I keep on smelling it. Yes, it is delicious. But, you know, I can't eat at present because my teeth are weak. When I get a new set of teeth—I mean not false, the real ones, then I'll ask you to prepare some food for me.

24 February 1962

MOTHER: You must have been in Egypt once, an Egyptian lady.

SEHRA: Mother, why do you say this?

MOTHER: Because I saw, just now, behind your shoulders, an Egyptian god with his head-gear on which there was an eagle. You were as if standing held and protected by him.

SEHRA: You are protecting me now. So it must be you at that time also.

MOTHER: Yes, I know, but I don't like always to say it was I or that I have done this or that. You see, it must have been a promise given at that time and it is being fulfilled now. Similarly the promise which is given now will be fulfilled in the course of time—in the future.

SONNET

As I am ready to touch the switch
That shuts off the electric light,
My tired eyes are suddenly fixed
Upon a photo of You that night
After night has graced my final glance
Before I fade into shadowy dream.
But now, as if by a touch of trance,
The hand stops strangely, and I seem
To feel again Your look of fire
That blasted open, part by part,
A path through my protective mire
And lost itself inside my heart.
I stare there where Your eyes have shown
We two are one and yet alone.

GORDEN

MEMORY OF EVENING CONCENTRATION

A POEM AND A COMMENT

YOUR tiny dainty Feet have just to tread in our midst,
Your beautiful poised Head has just to turn around,
Little Lady of our profoundest heart—
Queen of Silent Prayer and the Soul's Secret Sound!

Though hundreds of us imperfect beings gather,
Though You be tinier than most of all,
In that wide courtyard the essence of Your Being
Rises like vast echoes of a waterfall.

You are silent but Your Splendour fills every waiting mind,
Your Pressure is a seal of peace on every heart—
Sweet Mother, of Your Divinity and Infinite Consciousness
Make us, poor lonely mortals, even a tiny part!

February 1953

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

Comment by K. D. Sethna to a Friend

You have asked me what I think of Minnie's poem. Let me give you my impression of both its scheme and its quality.

The quality is a sort of familiar-lyrical, dipping easily every now and then to a devotional depth. The lines convey to us some direct sense of the Mother's actual physical person moving or standing amongst us with her "tiny dainty Feet" and "beautiful poised Head". It is not only her supraphysical Godesshood that is evoked.

In the first stanza, this sense is immediately joined up with her sovereign beauty and power in our inner being. The two sides—the sweet smallness to the outer eye and the superhuman greatness felt inwardly—are suggested with a piquant profundity here as well as in the second stanza where occur perhaps the best two lines of the poem, the seventh and eighth. I may also point out that lines 3 and 4 are also fine enough and the whole third stanza has an unstrained fineness. In this stanza the theme of the inner greatness is continued and amplified—the motifs of "Silent Prayer" and "the Soul's Secret Sound" which run through the preceding stanzas are picked up again, but with a more explicit touch of psychological experience, and in the last two lines the explicitness is extended also to the Mother's person and being—and at the very close the word "tiny" which had been endearingly applied to her in each of the other stanzas makes a sudden turn and, in a prayer about ourselves,

gets applied to *us* in comparison with whom she is an "Infinite Consciousness". This turn is one of the special subtle effects of the poem.

I think that, as the Mother once approvingly said about an earlier lyric of Minnie's, this piece, though in another manner, is in its psychic-physical charm "*très joli*". Coming to it from the grandeurs and splendours, intensities and powers of a different kind often displayed in poems on the Mother, we may be likely to overlook its peculiar blend of facility with felicity and the appeal implied by the word "*joli*" in its true French sense and associations, which go beyond the English "pretty". Its not being "*superbe*" should not minimise its value.

THE COMING OF SPRING

IN a myriad-hued dance of birds and flowers
 Spring leapt from cold Winter's clasp,
 Changing all life to a rapture-dream
 Revealing God's beauty in the slow gliding hours.

No more life, burdened with material cares,
 Lay helpless, inert in a gloomy abyss.
 Revelling in fragrance and in flight of song,
 Each moment her heart now throbbed in bright bliss.

Forgotten was long sorrow's slow-ending tale,
 In the sweet voice of Merle and Nightingale.
 A new birth made creepers climb tallest trees,
 Earth's prayer to God on a perfumed breeze.

Time measured not its steps in nights and days,
 All was an eternal hour of peace and delight
 Where sun and moon waltzed on a rapturous height,
 And Mignonettes and Roses wafted their scented lays.

My heart's search wandering endlessly
 Found at last a bliss in every beat,
 And in deep gratitude laid itself at Thy feet,
 Happy to feel lost, in Thy embrace of honey-dewed ecstasy.

LALITA

SOME NOTES ON THE MOTHER'S *PRIÈRES ET MÉDITATIONS*

(6)

November 8, 1914

“THE power to express” can be through various means: action, words, writing, the arts. The Mother has used all these means.

November 9, 1914

“We aspire.” Aspiration is a thing that is universal. It is not the individual's own creation. It is always there. It only finds an expression through those who are receptive.

November 10, 1914

“Thy Presence in me has become an unshakable rock.” Storms may blow and the waters rage, but the rock remains unshaken. One who is conscious of the Divine Presence which is always there in the psychic being, *dans l'être psychique*, stands firm like a rock in the midst of the shocks of life. The Presence is always there, but one is not conscious of it all the time. At first one remains conscious for a little while, then it gets obliterated, *s'efface*. It goes on like that till one reaches a point when one feels the Presence all the time, in the midst of all kinds of work and all kinds of people. What has been described here is that state when the sense of the Presence is always there.

November 20, 1914

“Old frames of thought.” These are the habitual thoughts, those that are traditional, normal and occur repeatedly, the mental reactions which remain in being because it is a habit. These are the mental formations. When they break, one is astonished to find how childish they were.

November 21, 1914

“Rancour” is the sign of a consciousness so narrow, so mean and vulgar! It is a sign that all the doors are closed. How is one to get rid of it? The answer was: it needs simply a little progress.

December 4, 1914

“The experiences” should not have any mental basis whatever, *des fondations*

mentales quelles qu'elles soient. They have real validity, when they are without a mental form, *vraiment valables quand elles existent sans formes mentales.* The mental form comes after the experience.

“The sovereign peace of Something which is not expressed in words.” When you read something, when you think with the mind, you form a thought structure. These are the “mental constructions”.

The Mother explained that till this time, *jusque là*, her mental constructions had been very living, very creative, having an influence on all things, *très vivantes, très créatrices, influençant toutes choses.* And then, all on a sudden, there was no idea any more, no thought, *plus d'une idée, plus d'une pensée...* Silence. Out of this silence something arose and spread itself over everything, *se répand en toutes choses*: a certitude, a knowledge, an identification.

This Silence is the Original Consciousness, *Conscience d'origine*, much higher and infinitely more vast, *de caractère infiniment plus vaste*, than our normal thinking. There is in this state a ‘detainment’, *détention*, of thoughts. There is no more the conflict of thoughts. A Light coming from on high brings every minute the consciousness that is necessary, *la conscience qu'il fallait.*

She mentioned in this connection that when Sri Aurobindo first had this gift of Silence, he could not even eat. He wrote everything from that time onwards in this state of Silence. The words came direct from the Source of the Knowledge; they went straight to the typewriter.

He passed on this Silence to the Mother. And she kept it always. Things came to her from on high, words would be gathered from a sort of storehouse of words, *magasin de mots*, somewhere in the head—the Mother seemed to indicate the forehead: there they would collect the words and pass them on outside, *là ils ramassent les mots et les passent dehors.*

Mentally, it was a complete emptiness, *un vide complet*, she said, continuing her description of the first experience of the Silence. All on a sudden, everything had evaporated, *tout est évaporé.* She could not think any more.

Sometimes one gets into this state. But there are people who become so frightened that they start again on their old rounds. They try to think with the mind, speculate, imagine, indulge in all the old habits of the mind; and they lose this precious gift of silence. What one should do is never to disturb this state, never call back the old thoughts. One must wait and see what is going to happen, *ce qu'il va arriver.* If you can keep this state and remain altogether motionless, quiet and very peaceful, turned towards the heights with an aspiration, *tout à fait immobile, tranquille et très paisible, tourné vers le haut dans une aspiration*, a light falls into the silence, a drop, a condensation of the knowledge. It is a most precious thing to keep.

The Mother added that the best way to pass on a knowledge is to live the knowledge. Those who are ready or fit to receive the knowledge receive it through an inner vibration, without the necessity of the spoken word. The ancient teachings took note of this fact and they based their disciplines on this power-communication

in silence. When knowledge is passed on in this manner, it need not even be formulated in words. Words take form in the mind of the recipient in the language to which he is accustomed. What the teacher does is to awaken, *faire surgir*, something in the mind of the hearer. That is the direct communication of thought.

December 10, 1914

“Truth is eternally outside all we can think or say of it.” Mind cannot attain to the Truth; one cannot think about it with the mind. There is an inner perception of the Truth which is much more precise than the mental perception, *la perception mentale*.

Truth is an aspect of the Supreme Consciousness. We possess in the centre of our psychic being an element of this Truth. If we concentrate, if we open ourselves to that, we can have a direct perception of this Truth. We can live It, we cannot think It out, *nous ne pouvons pas la penser*.

“Our attitude towards action.” It is our idea of things that decides and governs our action and attitude. One thinks before one acts; at least that is what happens when one does not act just out of sheer habit; and even in the latter case, the first time one acts is the result of a thought. So, if we think and decide in our minds that the world is in a bad state, *le monde est mauvais*, and that it can never be changed, one no longer concerns oneself with the world; one remains shut up in one’s little cocoon, without troubling oneself about anything. Take an example.

You happen to live with somebody who is simply impossible, *insupportable*, so violent and evil and egoistic that you come to think, “Oh, he is impossible, nothing could be done to change him.” And you let him alone, without trying to do anything to help him change his evil habits. Perhaps all you do is to leave his company and thus flee from the evil touch; or you shut yourself up in yourself and never bother any more about him.

If on the other hand, you begin to think, “Everything can change”, you look for the means, you work at it, *on cherche les moyens, on travaille*. And then something can be done to bring about the change. The mind may try and fail and give up the hope and feel that nothing can be done. But there is something within you and deeper that goes on prompting, an inner ardour, which says, “Try, try.” This is the divinity within you. To hear its voice and follow it is the right road.

“We must know how to lose everything in order to gain everything.” This was emphasised by the Mother with great gravity. If you cling to what you are, what you have been, *si tu te cramponnes à ce que tu es, à ce que tu as été*, you can never march forward. It is as if you wanted to walk the streets with your house on your back. You must leave behind the things of the past and advance towards a thing that has not yet manifested.

If you have erected around you a number of mental constructions, ideas as to how you should act and what is the right thing to do, if you try to put them into prac-

tice hoping that they will guide you on the right road, *servent de guides* to be able to go forward; for such mental constructions are of no value, *n'ont pas leur*. You must always understand and learn more and more, *il faut que vous compreniez, appreniez toujours plus*. Your head is full of things; you must empty that, *il faut vider tout ça*, so that it may get filled with things anew. You must be empty, then you receive the new things.

December 22, 1914

"It was receptive and allowed all possibilities to take form in it." The mind was very vast, it received all the forms of thought that came to it, all the possibilities which the Divine Will might manifest on earth. The mind is the necessary intermediary for manifesting the higher forces.

There were two possibilities in the main, two ideas that arose in the mind. The first was a mountain or lonely forest, live in solitude and effect the inner transformation of oneself and leave the world to its old ways. The other was a city, a centre of life, extremely active, *vivante*, like a city where the supramental life could be lived on our earth. It would be a new kind of spiritual people, with an extremely active life.

The problem was: what to do? The mind then decided: I will be like any more; I want to be like a channel, absolutely unmoving and unchanging, myself like that. At every moment, the Will expressed itself through the mind knowing in advance what it would be. Afterwards, the mind knew what the Divine Will was, what was the Work to be done."

The programme is the transformation of the earth and realization of the supramental life, *la transformation de la terre pour réaliser la vie supramentale*.

The Supreme Will shall decide and choose.

"These importunate visitors" were the ideas about the Work that came to the mind.

Normally, our minds are always swarming with all kinds of thoughts, they come about at will, like mosquitoes. They come and go, they leave you, they make you lose confidence in yourself because you let them come and go instead of controlling them. The first step in mental control is to know when one wants to think and what one wants to think about, and to do so as soon as possible. You have to remain very still, *immobile*. You have to choose what thoughts will gain entry and which will be kept out. You must say to them, "Get away, I don't want you." You have to acquire the power to think what you want, *penser juste ce que vous voulez*.

(To be continued)

\ \ PAGES FROM A SADHAK'S DIARY

(Continued from the issue of December 1978)

(2)

THOUGH we may say that the Mother has endless Forms and that She is also above all forms, yet it is also true that She has a Form of her own.

A few people may have seen the Mother in her own Form.

It is possible for a sadhak to see the Mother in her four different Aspects and have experience of the four different Forces if She is pleased with him. But some may like Mahakali and some may like Durga; it depends on the individual.

*

In the Mother's Symbol, the four lotuses in the inner circle represent the four Aspects. The twelve lotuses in the outer circle give the number (signifying perfection in creation) which is the number for Aditi, the primal Consciousness-Force, the supreme Creatrix.

The lion is the symbol of Shakti, and is the vehicle of the Mahashakti, the Mother. The worshippers of the Mahashakti may have seen the lion in vision or meditation or dream. If one sees the lion playing with him or if it shows itself in a benevolent mood, it means that the Mahashakti is pleased with him; if the lion appears to be angry, it means her displeasure.

Love is the only thing that helps us realise the Mother; and it is the only way to approach her. Although our Mother is fond of roses, the flower (pomegranate flower) which She calls "Divine Love" is her own flower.

*

Of the four Aspects of the Mother, Maheshwari is very fair, but a little pale. She is of a tolerant nature and does not demand immediate performance of our duty. She knows that we live in eternity and that there need not be a hurry for anything.

Mahakali never forgives anyone if she finds anything wrong in him. It is very difficult for us to know when Mahakali is present in the Mother. But if by chance we disregard or show disrespect to the Mother when Mahakali is present, we may be open to serious danger.

Mahalakshmi is extremely beautiful. She turns away her face from a sadhak if he fails to fulfil her conditions. She does not leave him for good, but keeps waiting at a distance till the proper conditions are created.

Mahasaraswati never leaves her devotee, nor does she give him blows, no matter what he does. She continues with her work, very carefully and patiently.

The lotus is the flower of Maheshwari, *javā* (named Power by the Mother) is Mahakali's flower, the water lily is that of Mahalakshmi, and the flowers named "Sincerity" and "Perfection in works" those of Mahasaraswati.

Besides these four, there is the Ananda Aspect of the Mother.

*

These Forces and Personalities of the Mother come to her either one by one or they come all of them together.

But all these Forces, however powerful they may be, are nothing but playthings to the Mother when compared with her direct Force. We must always remember that the Mother is the Supreme Mahashakti and the source of all her Powers and Personalities.

Nevertheless, the Mother sometimes allows Mahakali to act, simply in order to teach us a lesson.¹ Here is an actual instance I have seen with my own eyes.

A strong young sportsman of the Ashram once behaved rudely with the Mother in my presence. He was in his best sporting form and it was expected that he would come out first in many of the athletic events. But to my surprise his first long jump was a failure, and in the second attempt he injured his knees and fell flat on the ground. The boy was shaking all over and asked me the reason. I reminded him of his conduct towards the Mother and advised him to pray to the Mother to forgive him. He did so, but I came to know that the Mother had actually protected him from the wrath of Mahakali, and simply allowed her to teach him a lesson.

*

We Indians have a firm faith in Grace, and the Power of Grace is limitless.

The Mother once described to her son Monsieur André Morisset how he had been saved from a catastrophe during the Great War. He was then a Lieutenant in the army. About a dozen artillery men led by him had been surrounded by the enemy. One by one, all the gunners were killed, but at the last moment some men from the French army came to his rescue and he was saved.

The Mother's Grace can save people from imminent death even when they are not disciples or intimately connected with the Mother. A lady friend of Mr. and Mrs. X (both of them are inmates of the Ashram) was lying mortally ill in Bombay and the doctors had given up all hope. The husband sent them a photograph of the sick lady and requested them to pray to the Mother for her recovery. The Mother looked at the photo and said that it was too late. But Mr. and Mrs. X went on praying to the Mother. She looked at the photo once again, and the next day news came

¹ One is reminded here of the Mother's letter to a disciple: "Kali's force is necessary [for the transformation] only for those who are not yet open to the Divine Love..." (*Bulletin*, November 1978, p. 78)—*Editor*.

from Bombay that the lady was free from danger.

*

There is a common belief that the Mahashakti favours rich people, even though they may be dishonest and that money may not always come to honest people. Since many rich men spend their money on noble causes and endow temples and churches, hospitals and educational institutions, the Power of the Mahashakti is always acting behind them. So we think.

The question arises: if some of these rich people are really bad, why should they be favoured by the Mahashakti?

The Mother says that it is very difficult to understand these things with the human mind. The truth of the matter is that the world at present is governed by the Asura who calls himself the Lord of the Nations. All the institutions of the world are under this Asuric influence. If they are to be regarded as being directly guided by the Mahashakti, the Mother would call Her a rogue. And there would be no need to change ourselves or the world.

(To be continued)

IN REMEMBRANCE

On 23 December 1978 Sanat K. Banerji joined Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His departure is not only a deep private loss to the editor of *Mother India* but also a large public loss to *Mother India's* readers. All of us will miss the striking expressions of his insight and versatility. To the editor as a person his friendship, loyal and ever considerate, standing superior to all trying circumstances, was of rare value. Our readers will appreciate the fact that by a sort of foreknowing consideration he completed his series of "Notes on the Mother's *Prières et Méditations*" before his demise and put them safely in the editor's hands for future use.

The year 1978 marked the exit of two cherished friends of the editor: in the first half, Girdharlal and, at very nearly the end, Sanat.

THE MOTHER AND SRI AUROBINDO IN THE LIGHT OF NUMEROLOGY

I

FEBRUARY 21 is the Mother's birthday. She was born in 1878. Sri Aurobindo was born on August 15, 1872. From 1872 to 1878 there are 6 years. From August to February, as well as from February to August, we have 6 months. From 15 to 21 the period is 6 days.

The name "Mother" has itself 6 letters. The name "Sri Aurobindo" has 12, which is the double of 6, and therefore from 6 to 12 the number is again 6. When we look at the days of birth, it is the number 15 of Sri Aurobindo's that adds up by its components to 6, while the number 21 of the Mother's is 12 in reverse. Besides, both 21 and 12 come to 3, which is the common unit whose multiples make 6, 12, 15 and 21.

The components of 1878—the Mother's year of birth—add up to 24 which not only is the double of 12 but also adds up to 6. The components of 1872—Sri Aurobindo's year of birth—add up to 18 which not only is the treble of 6 but also, when added to the Mother's 24, gives 42 whose components once more yield 6.

The Mother has said that Sri Aurobindo's spiritual number is 12. Now, not only is Sri Aurobindo's name composed of 12 letters but also, when the components of his day of birth are added to those of his year, we get $1+5+1+8+7+2=24=6$ and, when the number of letters of his month August is further added to this 6, we get $6+6=12$. A 12-year period has also been seen as marking the most important milestones in his Yogic work onward from 1914 when he first met the Mother and their joint spiritual activity began. In 1926 there was the descent of the Overmind into his physical being as well as the Mother's. Although the Supermind had been already present in the body by 1938 in the sense that it had descended into the embodied complex of mental, vital and subtle-physical beings, it descended in 1938 into the outer physical being for the first time. What could not be done then was to fix it there. In 1950 Sri Aurobindo gave up his body in a strategic self-sacrifice and the Supramental Light was drawn down for good and fixed in the physical mind of the Mother, constituting what he had called the Mind of Light.

We have learnt from the Mother that Sri Aurobindo, in leaving his body, sacrificed his own personal fulfilment in order to hasten the fulfilment of mankind. We may take as a sign of the hastened process the fact that what the Mother has described as the Supermind's manifestation on a universal scale in the earth's subtle-physical layer took place not 12 years after 1950 but in half the time—merely 6 years after it: that is, in 1956. The recurrence of the number 6 rather than any other in this hastened process should be noted.

According to the Mother, 12 represents the New Perfection which will be the Supramental World on earth: her own Lotus-symbol has 12 petals in its outermost

ring. But 6 is a repeating figure in the numerological set-up of Sri Aurobindo's work. Even his symbol is a 6-pointed star. Particularly significant is the number 6 in connection with the Mother. And 6, in her numerology, represents the Divine Creation.

2

Yes, a great deal of meaningful numerology serves as light on the lives and labours of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Yet we cannot expect that the play of 6 and 12 should hold for all the chronological aspects of their lives and labours. Sri Aurobindo wrote to me on 28 July 1937 when I was discussing his past lives and the Mother's: "Your artistic passion for symmetry may easily mislead you, for life has all sorts of irregular figures. Your reasonings are too geometrical." And we find it impossible to press regularities and recurrences too far in the present context. A discrepancy crops up in regard to the hours of birth. The Mother was born at 10.15 a.m., Paris local time, which is 9 minutes 60 seconds ahead of Greenwich time. Sri Aurobindo was born at about 4.52 a.m. at Calcutta. There is no precise or even approximate 6-hour interval, as one may anticipate from the intervals connected with the days and the years of birth.

When I had put before the Mother my numerological calculations, she had indirectly warned me against going too far, by pointing out that if the French "Mère" for "Mother" is considered, we have no more than 4 letters instead of 6. The same would be true about the Mother's personal name "Mirra" as balanced again "Sri Aurobindo": the number of letters would be 5.

Of course "La Mère" would provide the required quantum, but then its English counterpart would be "The Mother", a 9-letter name. No doubt, 9 is a multiple of the common unit 3 whose multiples are 6, 12, 15, 21: what is more, it is itself 3 taken 3 times and its relation to our scheme may be pleaded on two grounds. First, Sri Aurobindo's birth-year 1872 sums up to $18=9$. Secondly, the day of the Mother's birth and that of Sri Aurobindo's, when reduced respectively to $(2+1=)3$ and $(1+5=)6$, sum up together to 9. Similarly, the 12 of "Sri Aurobindo" plus the 6 of "Mother" come to 18 which is equal to 9. Lastly, 9 is also part of the series 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950 when each year's digits are summed up. The year 1926 reduces itself to $18=9$. But in this way a lot of ingenuity needs to be exercised. The results do not show themselves naturally.

We may conclude that in relation to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo we should accept large numerological significances without making a fetish of numerology.

K.D.S.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely on Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

July 30, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO (*starting the day's talk*): So Hitler has changed the date to September 15th.

P: Yes. He doesn't know what to do and the Balkan problem also is engaging him.

SRI AUROBINDO: He must have relied on the French fleet to surrender to him. If he had attacked at once there might have been some chance of success.

P: Yes, the time has been now on England's side. She has prepared herself and learnt her lessons. If the French had not submitted, they could have very well carried on the war from their colonies. They had still a sufficiently big army and their navy was substantial. They could have at least taken hold of the Italian possessions in Africa.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and it would have been a great gain.

EVENING

P: There is a rumour in the *Cercle*¹ that Mandel is going to be shot.

SRI AUROBINDO: Ah! If they begin by shooting, how will it all end? But on what charge?

P: On the charge of entering into some inner agreement with England.

SRI AUROBINDO: But England was not an enemy. If it was for overthrowing the Pétain Government I could understand. No, it must be out of revenge. During his ministership he imprisoned many Fascists.

P: In this way the revolution may be quicker.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but people everywhere are tame and timid now. The Socialists and Democrats have no ardour like that of the Nazis and Communists. The Poles seem to be the only brave people, they are still continuing a guerilla war; they have not yet caved in. The Finns were also doing well but as soon as defeat began they caved in.

¹ The French club in Pondicherry.

S: Where is Colonel Beck?

SRI AUROBINDO: He is in Rumania. Rumania's Government does not allow him to go to England. It is as well, because he would clash with the Polish Government there and make a lot of mistakes.

N: Rajagopalachari says the English are a desirable lot.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, he has seen what others are like.

N: And he says England gives way to public pressure.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true.

JULY 31, 1940

The Hindu has published that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have given Rs.1000/- to the war fund.

S: It is good Jaswant is in prison. Otherwise he would have sent another letter.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes.

P: I had a letter from his brother. He is very happy in jail, he says. Put in B class.

SRI AUROBINDO: Like Oswald Mosley?

P: They fixed his marriage but due to imprisonment had to drop it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? They couldn't arrange it in jail?

P: Russia has demanded the return of her trucks from Rumania.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): Yes. She seems to be looking for an excuse for a quarrel.

P: Rumania has given no reply and is perhaps turning to Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler will say he is not going to fight Russia for some trucks. He will advise her to settle it.

N: As in the case of Hungary, Bulgaria, etc.? If Rumania concedes to all of them, very little of her will remain.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and she will be so light that she won't weigh on the Axis.

P: Mandel, Reynaud, Gamelin, etc. are going to be tried, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Gamelin for insufficient preparation. In that case Pétain is also to blame. He was President of Defence for so many years and he has done nothing. Mandel and others have been betrayed by Nogues. It seems he invited them to Africa to fight from there against Germany and then betrayed them to Pétain. It was very unwise of them to have gone there. This De Gaulle is a remarkable man. He foresaw all these things and knew what was in store for him and left for England beforehand.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after some time*): This book on Modern Poetry by F. R. Leavis is very heavy reading.

P: Nolini also said that. He couldn't make anything out of it. The author says that the reading public of poetry is getting very small.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and he says it is a very good thing. (*Laughter*)

P: But the number of poets is increasing, he says, and many have talents. But the talent depends on what use society will make of it.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Obviously!

P: You have seen at the end of the book what he says about the sale of poetry books?

SRI AUROBINDO: No.

P: He has quoted a Publisher's statement—very revealing. The Publisher says that out of many books published, some—about one dozen—brought £ 12 altogether from the sale and, as for the rest, he lost almost double the sum.

SRI AUROBINDO: You know what an English publisher said when my poems were presented to him by somebody for publication? He said they were very striking but nobody would buy them, as none read poetry now. He added: "Let the poet write some prose first and make a name and then his poetry may sell."

N: No wonder people won't read poetry after what the Modernists have done with it.

P: It is the same thing in painting too. I remember how François and Agnes used to cudgel their brains to find out the significance of some bizarre, grotesque pictures.

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps it was meant only as a joke and no meaning was there. You know the origin of Cubism? Mother used to go among the artists. One day she found that two artists as a joke had made some queer figures but people began to find great originality in them and praise them. They then took it up seriously. There was a postman who painted a green cow grazing on red grass. People began to remark: "How original! How striking!" and now he is an outstanding painter. I forget his name. (*Laughter*)

(EVENING)

N: This arrest of a well-known Englishman in Japan on an espionage charge looks fishy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Very fishy. The Japanese are showing themselves as masters and want others to submit. For espionage the British give regular training, they won't employ well-known people in that business.

N: And the death of Knox also is not very convincing. How could he get through the resistance of the gendarmes? As Mother said, the Japanese may have got rid of him themselves to cover up some crime of their own.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, the death is not convincing. The Japanese are becoming bullies now. It is the new spirit of the Nazis and Fascists they have got from the West.

N: But I don't think an Englishman would have done what they say.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, not a high-class Englishman. The English and Americans are very haughty and disdainful, they haven't understood the Japanese as for instance people like Lafcadio Hearn did. And they are now being paid back.

N: The English in India have, of course, done worse things.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes, in the colonies they are quite different. All other Powers except the French treat their subject races alike.

N: But just when England is involved Japan is taking these steps.

SRI AUROBINDO: People are showing themselves in their true colours in times of danger.

P (*after some time*): Have you seen the *Masnavi* by Jalaluddin Rumi? A Professor of Hyderabad reviewing your *Life Divine* has said that all about evolution and descent in it was already said by Rumi.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have glanced at the *Masnavi*. Yes, Rumi does speak of evolution but it is an individual evolution. Surprisingly he does not mention rebirth. If he admits individual evolution he has to admit rebirth. An individual can't evolve in one birth only.

P: Sufis do admit rebirth, I think, in a way.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, do they? Rumi speaks of transmigration which is quite a different matter—taking different bodies, animals, birds, etc. Transmigration would bar entrance to other worlds. It would be an immediate process.

NIRODBARAN

OUR LIGHT AND DELIGHT

RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of January 1979)

15

Spiritual Life in the Mother's Light

IN the spiritual life, even more than in other fields since the possibilities and the pitfalls are greater here, a proper assessment of oneself is salutary and helpful. Two generations ago Tagore said that although India was lying in the dust the very dust in which she lay was holy. Obviously it was in his mind that this dust had been trod by the feet of Rishis and Saints and Avatars. Sri Aurobindo's comment is reported to have been that whatever might be the case the dust could not be the proper thing for a man to lie in and that man had not been created to adopt a prone posture. Indeed, if the Rishis and Saints and Avatars are our models, then even while we may be prepared to "take the dust of their feet", as we in India call the act of *pranam* to the Guru, we have normally to be as they were—with our heads and feet in the right places, the former in the free-flowing air, the latter on the firm-fixed earth.

There is a true humility and a false one. The false is likely not only to make a virtue of disgrace but also to stand in the way of aspiration as though a limit were set forever to man's development. The true humility takes at once a realistic and an idealistic view of the limited state in which man at present is. It indulges in no anthropocentric vision of the universe, which would constitute his present state itself the highest possible point of God's manifestation; and yet there is a hopeful mood, an evolutionary vision, refusing the rule of "Thus far and no further". The only proviso preventing the forward-looking humility from turning into a pride of progressivism is that one should know oneself as facing always an endless Ahead of unachieved spirituality. This sense of an Infinite always in front is the Mother's definition of true humility: one feels that at each stage one falls short of the Supreme—

For the Divine is no fixed paradise
But truth beyond great truth...

as an Ashram poet has sung. And the Mother said that she had met only one complete exemplar of such humility: Sri Aurobindo.

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo may be expected to create in a more or less degree the Aurobindonian stance in its practitioners. One is never allowed to remain entrenched in this or that high experience. A pressure is put to grow on every side and dare fresh flights into the Unknown. In other spiritual paths one is content to be

a Jnani (Knower), a Bhakta (Devotee) or a Karmayogi (Doer of Divine Works). Here one is called upon to be all of them together—and something enormously extra. No wonder Sri Aurobindo once said that where the other Yogas terminate we make our beginning. The release of the individual consciousness into Eternity, Infinity, Divinity, is the basis for us of the release of Eternity, Infinity, Divinity into all the parts of our being for a total transformation of mind, life-force and body. Eternity, Infinity, Divinity themselves are to us more than they have been to spiritual seekers so far. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have been bent on bringing into action a power of these Ultimates more radically effective in earth-existence than ever before. As a result the practitioners of the Integral Yoga have had experiences which have scarcely been tabulated in earlier spiritual histories. But they are urged to halt nowhere. Many of them, if permitted to go into the common world with whatever they have realised along the lines of Jnana, Bhakti or Karmayoga, could easily set up as Masters and shine out. In the Ashram they remain almost unmarked—and, instead of being complimented upon their triumphs, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have gone on asking from them still higher and deeper and wider explorations of the Spirit.

Aware of the tremendous demand behind their summons, we often felt ourselves falling short. In view of that demand, even the simplest summons could at times prove too difficult to answer immediately. To give an example in a vein which both Sri Aurobindo with his abundant humour and the Mother with her quick wit would have enjoyed, I may say that to the Mother's simple-sounding New-Year's Message of 1969—"Are you ready?"—only one sadhak could answer "Yes" but in a sense never expected by the Mother. The sadhak was Narayana Reddi.

Occasionally the call was all too evidently towards an achievement unheard-of. Thus we were adjured in 1968: "Remain young." When an old sadhak was told this, he exclaimed with a sad face: "The first problem with me is just to *remain*." Age so obsesses us with its traditional associations of something physical which is irreversible that we miss the deeper meaning the Mother infused into the word "young". What she meant by asking us to remain young comes out in the sentence following this command: "Never stop striving towards perfection." Old age, according to her, arrives when we sit back either content that we have done enough or too tired to attempt anything more. As long as we are prepared to launch on a new adventure of the soul or body, there is no onset of age in the consciousness. And the youth that is in the consciousness shows itself soon in the outer self. A glow is on the face, a suppleness in the limbs, an energy in the movements. The idea of the impossible recedes—and even vanishes the moment we fulfil the prime condition of the Aurobindonian Yoga: dependence on the Divine Grace. All feeling of inadequacy, incompetence and inability arises from the failure of our personal being to do the needful. This feeling is ultimately a sign of the ego: we have depended on our bounded individuality in the belief that it can accomplish things by its own strength, and when this strength has proved insufficient we are plunged in despair and stand impotent. We fail to look beyond the ego and to put ourselves in the hands of the Divine Grace

whose possibilities are boundless.

Surely, personal effort cannot be given up in the early stages, but such effort must have as its goal a state of effortlessness in which the Divine Grace takes up our labour and acts through our being. To reach that state there have to be practised a constant equanimity in the face of people and circumstances and a constant dedication of ourselves and our work to the Supreme Lord, the Eternal Mother. Essentially these steps involve the abolition of the separative ego by leading towards the Atman, the Silent Universal Self one in all, and towards the Chaitya Purusha, Antaratman, the Inmost Soul, the entity called by Sri Aurobindo the "Psychic Being", who is the true individual in the evolutionary process from birth to birth and whose pseudo-form in the surface of our consciousness is the ego. Here some words of the Mother on the ego's abolition will be in place, differentiating as they do the static abolition from the dynamic.

At one of the sessions in the Prosperity Room before the evening's Soup Distribution—sessions which included about two dozen sadhaks sitting in a semi-circle in front of the Mother—the Mother said in effect: "No matter how liberated one may be by withdrawing from the play of one's nature, the ego will persist in the play unless one gives oneself in utter love to a Being other than oneself, to a Divine Person."

This statement may be elaborated and set forth step by step as follows. Even when the Atman is realised in a universal poise free from the mental-vital-physical nature and there is no sense left of the ego in the inner consciousness, the ego still keeps colouring one's thoughts and impulses and activities. To erase that colour there must be in the wake of the realisation of the static Atman a silence imposed by it on all the parts and then the emergence of the Psychic Being. Only when the Psychic Being with its intense movement of love for the Personal Divine takes charge of one the dynamic freedom from the ego occurs. Even if the Atman is not realised, the Psychic Being in full play in the mental-vital-physical nature can remove the twisting and turning ego by its spontaneous self-surrender to the Supreme Lord, the Eternal Mother. And this self-surrender will be most genuine, complete and effective—that is, most eradicated of the ego—if one's Yoga depends on a condition which has been stressed in Indian spirituality from ancient times: the presence of a God-realised Master, the human-divine Guru. If the outer self is deeply attuned to the spiritual call, the Guru may not be indispensable. But, by and large, the ego does not wholly disappear unless the aspirant, guided by his Psychic Being, puts himself devotedly in the hands of the Guru. The Guru serves as an absolute check, leaving little : the myriad self-deception for the sake of self-convenience to which man's nature is prone. One is now enfolded completely by the Other and the ego is afforded no chance to play about. Through this concrete and quite often very discomfiting Other, even one's most external form of mind and life-force, one gets intensely into with the egoless Lord of the universe, the creative Mother-Power of Grace—the Perfect Divine Person starts permeating one's human personality in every part. One is cleared of egoism with the greatest assurance.

The practical upshot for us of such a view was the necessity of giving ourselves entirely to the guidance of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. As the twofold incarnation of the Supramental Ishwara-Shakti, they could carry us most swiftly forward. On so complex a path as the Integral Yoga we could hardly have advanced without their light and love. And, suiting the path's complexity, they were beings of an immense versatility. Combined with towering spiritual attainment, Sri Aurobindo brought a rare genius in political thought, philosophical ideation, poetic expression, literary criticism, while the Mother stood as a most gifted painter and musician no less than as an expert on all life-problems and a supreme organiser. In addition, there was a warmth of heart and a charm of mind, a temperament lavishly jocular in Sri Aurobindo and delightfully ironic in the Mother. To be led by such Guruship meant extreme pleasure side by side with enormous profit. Even now, when they are no longer in material shape before us, the spiritual life for us should not change: it cannot be more pleasurable and profitable than by a continuation of the same disciple-teacher relationship. For, indeed they have assured us of their nearness to us in a subtle-physical form until their mighty work is accomplished. To concentrate on them as we knew them and open ourselves to their ever-flowing Grace by an adoring devotion is the best mode of progress.

Let us, however, not forget that in their eyes the inner progress has little value if the outer self does not reveal it by an increasing refinement and wideness, harmony and efficiency. In the absence of these outer qualities, we may even question a phrase like "inner progress". In a letter to my friend Nagin Doshi—as true a sadhaka as one could wish—Sri Aurobindo has actually said: "Obviously, the outer life must be a true example of the inner, not a mere empty mould or form. But if the outer life is unyogic, that means that the inner is still unchanged in some, even in a great, perhaps the greater part of itself" (14.2.1936).

To render the outer life Yogic, it is not enough to refrain from being mean, inconsiderate, nasty. Surely, the Integral Yogi is expected to be courteous and compassionate, understanding and generous, above gossip and backbiting, mindful of others' needs and not selfishly assertive or scheming, careful to control that fluctuation of inner and outer temper commonly defended as "mood". But he is expected also to face correctly the unyogic conduct of his fellows. Where a direct confrontation is necessary, he should have the courage to stand up to them and not run away to avoid unpleasantnesses—and yet there has to be a coolness, a calmness in the courage and not any stress to bring about a confrontation just for one's own benefit. All victories in Yoga are essentially victories over oneself rather than over others—and through these victories the Divine's outflow into the world.

What I mean may be summed up in what I once heard the Mother say to a Swiss sadhika. I was standing behind the latter, waiting for her to finish her pranam to the Mother. Almost every morning she had a tale of troubles to tell. She was in charge of some girls in an Ashram house and the neighbours of her establishment seemed to be a constant bother. They were reported by her to be harassing her daily, with either

hurtful words or obstructive acts or else a succession of pin-pricks subtly causing inconvenience. The Mother used to hear the complaints patiently. She had faith in the Swiss sadhika's sincerity and devotion; so she would soothe her and suggest various ways of avoiding conflict. One day, however, she came out with a master-formula: "La vraie attitude est toujours plus forte que toutes les personnes et toutes les circonstances" ("The right attitude is always stronger than any person or circumstance"). I have never forgotten this advice. It has been elaborated by the Mother in her "Notes on the Way" of September 10, 1969. But what I overheard dates back much earlier and it has proved an immense help—along with that other master-formula of the Mother's: "Remember and offer."

In fact, the two go together. The latter tells us never to let the sense of the Divine disappear from our consciousness and to make at all times a gesture of surrender to the Supreme Presence—surrender of our own selves, our thoughts and impulses, the work in hand, the environmental set-up of fellow-creatures and situation-complexes. In this manner our inner life goes on being not only intensified, deepened and heightened but also widened to cover the world which is the Divine's field of action. Again, the widening extends not merely to the subtle psychological ambiance of a consciousness in relation with other consciousnesses: it extends as well to all one's material acts and to all the physical facts of interaction with material agents. Hence the whole outer life on both the psychological and the physical planes is brought within the practice and process of the inner Yoga. And such encompassment by the gesture of offering involves at every moment the taking of the right attitude: an attempt to detach the ego from the problem, an equanimity towards all behaviour and each turn of event, a poise of general goodwill, a passing of the situation from one's hands to the hands of the Divine, an appeal to the Highest to make one as well as others Its instrument and to dispose of the problem according to the Will of Its Wisdom.

Mentioning a poise of general goodwill and the Will of the Divine's Wisdom, I am led to the memory of a strange incident in my own inner life. A situation had arisen in which I had felt extremely harassed by a certain person. I did not know what step to take. I went to the Samadhi and sent up my prayer to the Mother to guide me. I fervently asked her: "What should I do to check this harassment? I would like to follow your will and your way." Suddenly there was an exquisite explosion, as it were, in the occult heart-centre in the middle of the chest and, through the opening made there, an intense love flowed out towards the person who had been considered an enemy. Here then was the Mother's unexpected answer to my appeal. This was the Mother's mode of dealing with the hatred I had felt to be pouring against me. The psychic being had come forward to solve the problem. It spontaneously saw the Divine within everyone and strove to pierce to that reality behind all masks and to dissolve the obstacles of the outer consciousness of both myself and the other party. The great saying of Buddha occurred to me: "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love."

When I met the person whose behaviour had affected me as harassment I said

quite simply: "When I looked into myself I could find nothing except love for you." The effect was magical. Gone was all that had seemed hostile. A new turn of conduct was immediately apparent. The wide warmth that had issued from my soul was no mere word-woven sentiment: it was an elemental force of luminous sweetness and could immediately kindle a light and a love where it touched.

I do not say that a complete lasting change can always be established. One may fall back into the old consciousness and the problem can recur. But the golden key was disclosed to me in that surprising moment. If we could command this key at all times, it would resolve every deadlock.

This key, I may add, is also a pointer towards understanding one of the most valued phenomena in our life with the Mother: her smile.

The Mother's smile was at once what I may term a revelation of rapture and an enigma of ecstasy. It was always like a door of heaven opening, but often one was at a loss to know why the door opened. And, when it did not, many thought she wished to show displeasure. Sri Aurobindo explained more than once that she could have a reason quite other than displeasure for not smiling: she might be absorbed in some inner work on the sadhaka. Conversely, she might smile without wanting to register full approval: she could act as a soother to some silly sense of hurt. But one thing I found invariable: whenever the deep heart in a child of hers opened in her presence, there was a wide smile from her side. And this smile had a special expression as of complete acceptance of that child and of ever deeper entry into his being. Sometimes, looking at the Mother on the one hand and at the sadhak on the other, one could perceive unmistakably the psychic-spiritual communion and interchange.

I have seen this phenomenon again and again in a certain period of my friend Nirodbaran's sadhana. Both Champaklal and I used to recognise and watch the delightful drama of the inner contact gleaming through the outer meeting. The Mother was all smiles. Champaklal whispered to me on one occasion: "What has happened in Nirod is a clear example of what is called 'reversal of consciousness'." The phrase employed means in general a sudden shift of an individual's habitual poise from the outer to the inner being and it signifies in particular, as it did in Nirod's case, such a shift from the mental-vital-physical complex to the true soul.

I have known Nirod and held him in great affection ever since he fell willynilly into the Divine's snare. I have seen him supervising the Carpentry "godown", eager to get for his consciousness a quick "go-up" by means of a lively correspondence every day with the Master. I have observed him in charge of the Ashram Dispensary, on the surface a frowning physician, seeming to accuse his patients of a crime whenever they took ill, but in the depths a conscientious curer, all the more anxious that his patients should get well and leave him alone since he was aspiring all the time to write poems rather than prescriptions. In the course of his "pleasure in poetic pains" I have been happy to help, now and then, his bright deliveries, and many have been the golden moments when we have tossed to and fro some problem of prosody and, discussing the lines of the Supramental Avatar's compositions, gone most enjoy-

ably against Alexander Pope's injunction:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan:

The proper study of mankind is man.

I have been in close touch with him during his lucky days when he was not only one of Sri Aurobindo's personal attendants but also his one and only scribe for the slowly dictated *Savitri*. After the Master's passing, he swam repeatedly into my ken as "a new planet" of professorship in that solar system of all-round enlightenment, our International Centre of Education under the directive gaze of the Mother. Hobnobbing with all these aspects of him, I have been glad of the warm friendship he has given me a friendship full of laughter in spite of his mask of a "Man of Sorrows", as the Master had jocularly nicknamed him. But the sheer sadhaka in me was gladdest to contemplate, and associate with, the new Nirod of that "reversal of consciousness".

The sudden shift in one's being may not invariably be permanent from the start, there may be an unshifting once more for a while; but after it has come the Yogic destiny is sealed and sooner or later one is bound to grow a predominantly psychic personality. The development will be sooner rather than later if one is vigilant enough to erase the lingering discords and fumbles of the ego and attend faithfully to the infallible tone of Krishna's flute-call from within.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN

CHAMPAKLAL AND A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MOTHER

AN INCIDENT ON 20 JULY 1977

ON the day we arrived at brother Kanad's house at Jammu, the first thing I saw was the Mother's beautiful photo hanging on the wall of the verandah. I have seen many photos of this type. But this one was exceptionally beautiful. It made me very happy.

One afternoon during our stay there, almost everybody was resting. I did not require rest because by the Mother's grace, I always felt very fresh. So I went to the verandah to enjoy the open air, and sat on a chair. The Mother's photo was there just behind me. My neck spontaneously turned again and again in its direction. It was very difficult to move my sight from Her. It seemed to me as if the Mother were standing and looking at us from the window. I was so happy to see it and was enjoying it very much. Just then Mr. Kanad came and sat beside me. As I was observing silence, I wrote for him what I felt about the photo.

In the evening we were sitting on the lawn in a circle. After some time Mr. Kanad came and sat beside me and asked for blessings. I thought it would be very interesting for him to know what had happened just before he came. Here is the account written by our brother Richard who was also present:

When we came back, we met the friendly dog who, seeing us, began to wag her tail. Then we sat on the lawn in a circle. Behind, in the verandah, the Mother's photo was hanging on the wall. Suddenly the dog began to bark, facing the verandah, as though some stranger had come there. Umaben laughed and said, 'The dog has just now noticed that the Mother's photo has been there!' We could not believe this and began to suggest other possible explanations. But no! the dog moved about near the verandah growling as she looked up and did not want to go near. Champaklal was watching intently. Umaben tried to tell the dog to be quiet, but she would not, and Champaklal seeing something behind this strange behaviour of the dog, signed to Umaben not to stop the dog from barking. Again and again Champaklal signed to her.

Then perhaps to show us that the Mother's photo was the cause of the excitement or perhaps to calm the dog, Umaben got up quietly and, speaking to the dog, went and stood under the Mother's photo in the verandah. She called her to show that there was no reason for fear.

The dog came, first slowly and sniffing carefully all round near the photo as though the scent of someone were there, and satisfied herself that all was safe. Then she sat down again in a corner of the verandah, perfectly calm and happy.

I find it very interesting because what I had felt during the day-time was felt by the dog in the evening. The dog felt the Mother's presence. First she got frightened

and remained very far from the Mother's photo; she began to bark. Then slowly she went a little nearer, stopped and began to bark once more. Again she came back, then went forward still nearer than before, and began to bark again. She repeated this several times. At the end she was able to go near the Mother's photo with the help of Umaben.

I wanted to see what the dog was doing all on her own. And it was interesting to watch her movements and her expression.

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TOWARDS THEE

SUPREME Effulgence! Thy hallowed face
And blissful smile portray the Goal—
Thy outstretched arms the tender voice
Of the joyfully beckoning Mother Soul.

I'll cast from me the cumbrous mesh,
The tangling snare of the Why and How,
And draw instead the Soul's delight
With a never-ceasing "Thou" and "Thou."

Let cosmic harmonies waken me
From slumbering Darkness's dull drone,
And Truth's outflashing glance reveal
Creation's pageant as Thou alone.

Reign over Nature, Peace sublime!
And, with the stilled mind's glowing eye,
Pierce Maya's iridescent veil,
Duality's cunning trap descry.

While wrapped in wide and gracious calm
Where every thought but turns to Thee,
A breathless joy lifts up the heart
And sets the spirit soaring free.

Shrined in my inmost being waits
Thy gold Supernal Beauty's face;
With eyes reflecting worlds unseen
Thou speedest me to the highest Grace.

Divine Munificence! Riches of Soul!
Pour down on those who search for Thee
That infinite precious gift, Thyself,
Even as to small surrendered me.

Let me reach all through Thee alone,
That Thy Spirit's crystalline beauty may flow
Into my gaze; and Wisdom's compassion
My freshly-nourished heart may know.

Let Enmity turn, on the tip of the flame
Kindled in my heart, to the One Divine;
Unity triumph, for at Thy gate
All souls within Thee must combine.

The Adversary, with ego's bait,
Seeks to entrap the aspiring soul,
For Thy Light and Love's descent will make
Futile his dire, destructive role.

Thy path, well-trod by risen Souls,
In Truth's bright eye is clearly seen;
If shadow-ridden woods enclose,
It is but Delusion's empty screen.

May all life's force be placed at Thy feet,
All spreading passions on Thee converge,
With constant faith Thy power increase,
All loves in one prostration merge!

When eyes to Thee, beseeching, turn
From the sick of heart and the maimed of soul,
Thy wondrous healing nectar flows
To make, once more, the broken whole.

Thy Mercy, from the Inconscient's vault
Delivers countless weeping souls
And sets them, on the wings of hope,
Soaring towards undreamed-of goals.

Grace, ever unforced and unforeseen,
Enchants the viewer with her magic wand,
Like the rainbow a-shimmer in the sun's embrace,
She thrills with the touch of the mystic Beyond.

When Silence glides in on dove-soft wings,
Turbulence settles and turmoil ceases;
Following close, Tranquillity brings
The calming cool of the ocean breezes.

Obstacles are but proofs of Thy love,
To shorten the resolute pilgrim's way,

For soon must Thy dream of fulgent Bliss
Manifest itself in the light of day.

The indwelling Self watches, serene,
The chained, blindfolded being drawn
Helpless across the soul's Dark Night,
To emerge, new-born, in the splendoured Dawn.

Thy plan holds not our puny measures
Of worth, nor blinkered hopes and fears;
The inner ear, attuned, may catch
Melodies set to the rhythm of spheres.

If, on a sudden, Darkness descends
And rushing come Depression and Doubt,
In the Spirit's censer let Faith rekindle
The flame that Obscurity's hand put out.

The baleful glare of Destruction follows
Thy devotee's march on the way to the Light,
But his hideous forms, on havoc bent,
On hearing Thy Name flee back to the Night.

Let Power, wrested from Falsehood's hands,
Through ego-freed mortals rest in Thy own;
Thus can be hastened the reign of Thy Truth
And within Man's heart Thy Presence be known.

While I, in Love's protection held,
Thy constant-flowing help receive,
Can envious Cunning's plans avail
And Hypocrisy's studied stance deceive?

I'll walk in Thy shadow, groping my way
The luminous Eternal's face to greet,
Until, full-visioned, alone I tread
The radiant path of Thy star-kissed feet.

“U”

TOWARDS THE HIGHER LIFE

(Continued from the issue of January 1979)

CHAPTER V

Descent into the Inconscient

5 (contd.)

THESE days, whenever dry periods intervene, I do not allow myself to be restless but keep a watch over my movements. One day the head got heated, so concentration was not possible. The body declined to go in for a quiet meditation. The vital also refused to co-operate. The Mother has said that nothing can be done if the vital goes on strike. A friend suggested: "There is a film to-day. Why don't you allow yourself to have some diversion?"

I avoid going to films, for the reason that thoughts keep on hovering for long afterwards. It takes time to make the mind thoughtless. (Some films have a great educational value. I shall cite an instance later on.) The suggestion acted and I went out but instead of going to the Playground I took another turn and reaching the sea-beach sat comfortably on the sea-side wall. The refreshing sea-breeze helped to pull my consciousness to the crown and I found myself staring vacantly into the sky. An hour passed with nothing there but the void. So far I have been able to keep myself merged in the state of void for three days with a break for various reasons. At the time the body appeared like an empty vessel. No restlessness of any kind, no sense of dryness. No experience. No resistance. No expectation from any corner. Can this be sustained without the purification of all that lies buried in the abysmal vault of the Inconscient?

Two experiences about the void call for mention. The last one instead of uplifting had a depressing influence.

Once it seemed I was lost in the vast expanse of an empty space. There remained no touch or trace of the body. All that remained was a void. When nothing was there, a gentle voice sprang up: "I am in the lap of the Infinite." Can one forget such momentous moments?

Another day I found myself within a circuit in which nothing was present. There rose the feeling: "I have created a world of my own in which I am all alone." After an instant's pause there rose another feeling, a queer one: "How shall I live alone here? There is none to give me company!" Was it a murmuring of some desolate part of the vital? I seemed to be devoured by that emptiness. This shows the *ādhāra* was not yet ready to rise to a higher rung of the ladder.

Another achievement of the action of the Mother's Force in the Inconscient may not appear spectacular but it is this that arouses in me some sense of mastery. "It is

in sleep," says the Mother "that man discerns his real nature."¹ For a dreamless sleep, "it is necessary to attain perfect mastery"². In dream when I passed a very exciting and extremely provocative test not once but three times, my nights became absolutely free from sex-thoughts, sex-scenes. Thus ended the struggle which had begun more than four decades ago. The siddhi that is acquired by the Tantric process I had the luck to achieve by the unceasing action of the Mother's Force in the Inconscient from 1958.

Increasing the period of *Kumbhak*, giving myself wholly to concentration I could easily prepare myself for mental realisation; but says Sri Aurobindo:

"...What is full realisation outside, is here only a beginning of siddhi. Here the test is transformation of the nature, psychic, spiritual, finally supramental."³

"Transformation means that the higher consciousness or nature is brought down into the mind, vital and body and takes the place of the lower."⁴

My sadhana seems to be evolving without any effort on my part, by itself—spontaneously—on these lines. Now let me tell how the change began.

My attention was first drawn to the mysterious change in the body in 1956—the year which, because of the Supramental Manifestation on 29 February, will be one day commemorated all over the world as the Golden Day. Mention should be made here that the change was visible in the very material part of the body, I mean the frontal part of the foot above the toes and nowhere else. It was quite surprising; bewildered, I looked again and yet again at the change that took place with long or short intervals. In the beginning I did not give it any importance, rather felt a bit amused. It might be due to bodily exertion, for I loved hard work, or due to physical exercises; so I let it slip from the mind. But it did not cease to engage my attention, rather it demanded constant vigilance even before the crucial year 1958. Had the process continued uninterrupted, the story of my life would have been written in different letters.

Though I showed no interest in it I could not shut my eyes. The analytic part of me kept a careful watch and missed no opportunity to study the symptoms critically, especially after 1963 when the broken thread of destiny was picked up again.

The experience had healthy as well as agonising reactions but it continued with repeated ups and downs and continues even today, making itself felt in different ways in different parts, yet it did not strike me even once to put it before the Mother. What proof could I produce if challenged? One day I find myself floating in the sky with the birds and on the next loitering in the burning sand.

Once I spoke about the experiences to Amal. He said, "They ought to be put on record lest they should be lost."

There rose a great hesitation: Why should I expose myself to the public eye? What value have these experiences until they reach a realising phase? However, even

¹, ² *Words of Long Ago*.

³ Nirodbaran, *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (1954), p. 107.

⁴ *Ōn Yoga II, Tome Two*, p. 259.

if the experiences be great they have nothing but a paper value unless people see some shining examples before their eyes.

The eastern ideal is to keep the spiritual gains a closely guarded secret. The western habit is just the opposite: to let others share one's experiments, derive inspiration from one's successes and failures, one's discoveries, and go ahead to achieve something hitherto unknown, untapped. The vacillation lasted more than ten long years. One reason was : I wanted to be dead-sure before committing myself in writing. Can anything written with the periwig ego, dipped in the ink of ignorance, be claimed as perfect? One day what decided me was the idea of giving my file to Amal for publication in *Mother India* if he thought it worthwhile. Then the experiences would bear the stamp of authenticity. I handed the file over to Amal. Returning it after a time he said, "I would like to serialise the notes in *Mother India*."

To sum up. Whenever the Mother's Force was active in the lower part of the body, the very cells of the part below the knees put on a new look, appeared full of life. This distinction I could mark more definitely when after a time the change receded and the signs of old age returned with full force. Thus a more eloquent evidence of the action of the Mother's Force was visible in the body's "sleeping cells". But my pygmy mind did not find anything special in this peculiar change.

One fateful night in 1978, when all was very quiet within, my consciousness harked back to the scene on November 24, 1950 and to what transpired eleven days later on December 5 when the Master left his body.

Since we had been expecting something unexpected about the great work to which he had given his heart and soul, I could not make out why his body looked pale and lustreless, why his limbs betrayed signs of old age. But these silly thoughts could not hold their ground even for a moment. I was so overwhelmed by the blazing rays that emanated from his creative eyes that I could not contain myself and felt that they would sustain me all through my life. There rose not even a ray of doubt that this would be our last chance of standing before him face to face.

But what a mysterious change took place in his lifeless body just eleven days after! What a miracle it was! What grandeur was there in this majestic figure! Hardly was there one who was not struck with wonder to discover the golden hue, the spectacular change and splendour in his bodily complexion. The very cells looked full of life, their youthful buoyancy was visible even to the naked eye. Except for the sprinkling of some grey hairs he looked as he had been in his regal stature before 1938.

Mind could not fathom this striking distinction at that time. We were carried away by the powerful utterances of the Mother which poured new life into us. I should not be saying this but the real significance of this marvellous change in his body dawned on me when I found some reassuring signs in myself in 1978 after 28 years of his passing.

What foolhardiness on my part! Surely I deserve the severest condemnation. Where was he and where was I? But must all that Sri Aurobindo achieved end with

him? Will his lofty ideas and ideals ever remain enshrined in and confined to the pages of his books? If a stray, a faint glimpse in its embryonic form is visible in one of the common run like me, must it be discarded as the nonsense of a madcap?

What he had achieved—was it only for himself? Can none of us dare share it? This question was very aptly raised by Nirodbaran in his *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*, (p. 71):¹

“...I don't quite follow what you mean when you state that whatever you achieve is possible for humanity to achieve, your attainments opening the way for others to follow.”

Sri Aurobindo countered: “It is singular that you cannot understand such a simple thing....I say that if it is not so, then my yoga is useless and my life was a mistake—a mere absurd freak of nature without meaning or consequence. You all seem to think it a great compliment to me to say that what I have done has no meaning for anybody except myself—it is the most damaging criticism of my work that could be made.”

Another more pointed and poignant question:

“You say that since ‘these things’ have been possible in you, they are possible in the earth consciousness. Quite true; but have they been done? Has any sweeper or street-beggar been changed into a Buddha or a Chaitanya by the Divine?”

Sri Aurobindo tried to convince Nirod:²

“What a wonderful argument! Since it has not been done, it cannot be done!.... The question involved is this—can one not become a new man by yoga? This I have proved in my sadhana, it can be done. When you say that I could do this only in my case because I am an Avatar(!) and it is improbable in any other case, you reduce my sadhana to an absurdity—and Avatarhood also to an absurdity. For my yoga is done not for myself who need nothing and do not need salvation or anything else, but precisely for the earth-consciousness, to open a way for the earth-consciousness to change.” (pp. 56-7)

In the beginning of 1973, the year the Mother left her body, “in a series of conversations with one or two teachers”³; she mentioned: “I have come to the point where I am doing the work for the cells of the body....”⁴

Is this not a unique phenomenon in the long history of spirituality? After the highest possible realisation, why did the Mother and Sri Aurobindo choose to enter the cave of sadhana again? Usually after realisation one proclaims himself a World-Teacher, but unlike others she allowed herself to be burnt like the wick of a lamp not for days but years. Why? No amount of inner probe or exploration by the mind can unravel the mystery. Was it the only way to acquire a glorified body?

Or was it to make the passage clear for those who would choose to tread the *Ashi-*

¹ 1954 edition.

² “He can fashion from clay a perfect shape of God.” *Savitri*, Part I, p. 282.

³ *Bulletin*, August 1978, pp. 43 & 49.

⁴ *Questions and Answers* (1956), p. 74.

path—the narrow edge of the sword—that she took all the brunt on herself as is done by one who spearheads a movement?

She bore the combined assault of the “Haters of Light” for years and years without allowing the work to suffer. Rather it increased in volume beyond expectation—the Ashram grew up as an international body. It was during this period that she gave a practical shape to her long cherished dream of a New City named after the French word “aurore”, meaning “dawn”, as well as echoing a part of the name “Aurobindo.” Had the speed with which the work was proceeding been kept up, something unique, inconceivable by the human mind, would have come into existence in her life-time. But a different turn was taken—no doubt with the Divine’s own sanction—for a purpose unknown.

(To be continued)

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SRI AUROBINDO AND THE INDIAN CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Indian Culture and Metaphysics

IN India the heart of culture is to be found in metaphysics. All her ways of being, ways of seeing and doing proceed from that centre. Whether she falls or rises it is due ultimately to the kind of metaphysics that dominates her cultural consciousness. To speak the truth, the outer circumstance in either case is not the real determinant. Evidently, the rise of free India depends more on freedom from the crippling ideas of her negative metaphysics than on freedom from foreign domination. Somehow with the coming of Buddhism and Shankara's Mayavada our metaphysical ideas lost their original comprehensiveness and wide affirmative quality. The ideas became so narrow and negative that life in the world was considered an error to be corrected by a total withdrawal into some nameless or featureless existence beyond. We may say that the influence of Mayavada on the cultural consciousness of our country is especially very marked. In this circumstance political independence cannot make India fully free. Unless political independence is followed by a parallel movement of independence at the level of her metaphysical ideas, India's achievement will be superficial and unsupported by the right sort of cultural consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo's Works on Metaphysics and Typical Responses to His Ideas

It may be asserted that one of the purposes for which Sri Aurobindo has written *The Life Divine* and other works on metaphysics is to expose the negative metaphysical ideas to a group of very powerful and positive ideas and to gradually but steadily emancipate the cultural consciousness of our country. It is now nearly six decades since he presented his ideas to his countrymen, and yet there seems to be a long way to go before the aim is achieved. The indications are that the metaphysicians, who perpetuate the old framework of metaphysical thought, seem to have felt the impact of Sri Aurobindo's ideas, although their professed aim is not to abandon or alter any of their ideas to which they are presently wedded. Once the impact is felt it is only a question of time for the old ideas to give way and finally disappear making room for the new ones.

It would be interesting to note the circumstances under which our cultural consciousness has yielded to the influence of Sri Aurobindo's ideas. It is worthwhile to mention three typical instances where Sri Aurobindo's ideas seem to have made their powerful impact: first, when Radhakrishnan translated the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and wrote a lengthy introduction to the Upanishads in general; second, when a professor of philosophy wrote a fairly long article to refute the teachings of Sri

Aurobindo in favour of Shankara's Mayavada; three, when another professional philosopher employed certain unconventional arguments to defend the position of Shankara's Mayavada. They all uphold the doctrines of Shankara, although each does this in his own way. They may be considered as typical exponents of the meta-physical content of our culture.

Incorporation of Sri Aurobindo's ideas

Radhakrishnan is a well-known advocate of Shankara. He says, while commenting on Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Veda, that he is reluctant to accept it because it is opposed to the orthodox interpretation. He writes:

We must hesitate to follow the lead of Mr. Aurobindo Ghosh, however ingenious his point of view may be.¹

But, while translating an important text in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *annam brahma* (3-2-1), he does not hesitate to follow the unorthodox interpretation of Sri Aurobindo and to translate the text as "*Matter is Brahman*"!² Shankara takes the word *annam* in its direct sense of *food* and explains the text accordingly. And all later commentators followed Shankara faithfully in explaining the meaning of this word. But Sri Aurobindo is the single exception who takes the word in its suggestive sense of *matter* and translates the text as "*Matter is Brahman*".³ This is obviously an unorthodox interpretation. Somehow Radhakrishnan is unable to brush it aside on the ground that it is unorthodox. Whatever may be the reasons for preferring Sri Aurobindo's interpretation to Shankara's, the fact remains that Radhakrishnan has reversed his original attitude and come to attach a greater significance to Sri Aurobindo's interpretation. A distressing element in the situation is that Radhakrishnan has chosen to adapt Sri Aurobindo's interpretation without due acknowledgement.*

Apart from this, there are a few instances to show how Radhakrishnan cannot help responding to Sri Aurobindo. As a matter of fact, if the writings of Radhakrishnan were to be scrutinised by a scholar well versed in the metaphysics of Sri Aurobindo, he would find to his great embarrassment that Radhakrishnan is freely borrowing the ideas of the latter without disclosing that he does so.

We shall take the definitions of the Absolute and God as given by Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan. According to Sri Aurobindo, the Absolute is "pure infinite *invariable* consciousness"⁴ which does not "cast itself into any kind of *extension* and, if it contains the universe at all, contains it in *eternal potentiality* and not in temporal actuality"⁵ That which develops the universe by "*comprehending*"⁶ all things in the Absolute and "*apprehending*"⁷ them as objects of its knowledge and will is a principle of "*Knowledge-Will*".⁸ It is a principle of "*vast*"⁹ "*self-knowledge*"¹⁰

* Chronologically, the works of Sri Aurobindo are earlier than those of Radhakrishnan.

as well as of “*all-determining*”¹¹ will inherent in the Absolute. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls Supermind. This is also “what we call God”.¹² Now we shall place Radhakrishnan’s definitions of the Absolute and God by the side of the previous ones:

If the Absolute is pure unity without any *extension* or *variation*, God is the creative power by which worlds spring into existence. The Absolute has moved out of its primal poise and become *knowledge-will*. It is the *all-determining* principle. It is the Absolute in action as Lord and Creator. While the Absolute is *spaceless and timeless potentiality*, God is the *vast self-awareness comprehending, apprehending every possibility*.¹³

The similarity between the definitions of Sri Aurobindo and those of Radhakrishnan is very striking. Further, we notice that in their definitions the words in italics are either exactly identical or synonymous. They strongly suggest that Radhakrishnan has borrowed not only the ideas but also the very terms of Sri Aurobindo. It is highly improbable that their correspondence is just an accidental parallelism. If there is any lingering doubt about our contention, one more instance from Radhakrishnan would be enough to set it at naught. Here is his definition of the finite:

The finite is the self-limitation of the infinite. No finite can exist in and by itself. It exists by the infinite.¹⁴

We shall now juxtapose it to Sri Aurobindo’s definition of the same term:

The finite is a frontal aspect and a self-determination of the Infinite; no finite can exist in itself and by itself, it exists by the Infinite and because it is of one essence with the Infinite.¹⁵

A glance at these definitions clearly shows that Radhakrishnan has taken off a portion from Sri Aurobindo’s work and incorporated it into his book with a few verbal modifications. The evidence is irrefutable.

Though we have exposed the real source of Radhakrishnan’s ‘new’ ideas, it is just incidental. Our chief aim is to demonstrate how in defining certain basic concepts of metaphysics he favoured the thoughts and terminology of Sri Aurobindo, though he could have defined them, as he had defined several other concepts, using Shankara’s ideas and terminology.

Recognition of Sri Aurobindo’s Challenge

A staunch supporter of Shankara’s Mayavada, Mr. G. R. Malkani accuses Sri Aurobindo of ignoring the *mahavakyas* altogether or explaining them away. He dismisses Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy out of hand as a system “based upon a very un-

orthodox interpretation of [the Upanishads]".¹⁶ To him an orthodox interpretation means the one offered by Shankara. He also says:

There is no evidence in Sri Aurobindo's writings of [the] supreme truth of the Upanishads.¹⁷

But, very ironically, he enumerates systematically all the arguments of Sri Aurobindo against Mayavada and opposes them one by one in an 18-page article. If his real opinion is that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is fit only to be summarily rejected on the score that it does not reflect the true spirit of the Upanishads, he should have normally ignored all of Sri Aurobindo's arguments. But what he has done is to the contrary. He seems to have realised that Sri Aurobindo's arguments *do* call for a systematic study and analysis before being dismissed in favour of Shankara. Certainly it is a major but negative response to Sri Aurobindo, for there is a clear recognition that his ideas constitute a real challenge to Shankara's Mayavada.

Adoption of Sri Aurobindo's Logic

As an exponent of Shankara's Mayavada, Dr. K. B. Ramakrishna Rao points out that Sri Aurobindo's conception of the Absolute has been condemned to the order of the relative and cannot rise to the level of an Absolute transcending the relative. He observes:

At best the Absolute of [Sri Aurobindo] is a conditioned principle not capable of rising above its own polar forces—the finite, the temporal, the relative, but holding all of them in a harmony of the opposing forces of *equal* strength or potency. That is, the entire system is held by a dynamics of opposition, which is by any logic relative and not above the relative.¹⁸

But it is quite strange to note that Dr. Ramakrishna Rao is trying to resolve a knotty point in the conception of Shankara's Absolute by employing Sri Aurobindo's logic!

A brief outline of Sri Aurobindo's logic will be helpful before we proceed further. The Absolute, according to Sri Aurobindo, is "illimitably free, free to determine itself infinitely, free from all restraining effect of its own creations".¹⁹ He teaches that the Absolute is ill-conceived if it is not related to the idea of illimitable freedom which is freedom *of* infinite self-limitations as well as freedom *from* any restriction by such self-limitations. He also teaches that the power of self-limitation includes even the power of self-absorption in form in order to become a boundless ocean of inconscient infinitesimals.²⁰ In other words, it is perfectly possible to get an extremely limited principle such as inconscient Matter out of the unlimited Absolute. The logic which permits all forms of self-limitation not excluding this extreme contrariety is what Sri Aurobindo calls the logic of the Infinite.²¹ We shall note that among Indian philo-

sophers Sri Aurobindo is the first to teach that the key to a proper comprehension of the Absolute is in the logic of the Infinite.

In Shankara's philosophy Maya is conceived as a principle totally opposite to Brahman. Brahman is consciousness immutable, partless and immaterial, whereas Maya is inconscient, dynamic and constituted of material atoms. In the past several attempts were made to overcome this dualism, but every time it turned out to be a vain attempt. Now it is Dr. Ramakrishna Rao's turn. To overcome this irksome point he offers the following argument:

Until the concept of the Absolute as the *Infinite* and *Absolute Freedom* is grasped, it is difficult, nay, impossible to overcome the commonly experienced irksomeness in reconciling the non-related Absolute on one side and the Principle of Relativity (i.e. Maya)...on the other... As Infinite Existence and Infinite Freedom the Absolute can be *anything*—the possibility of its own impossibility, not excluding! Maya or Relativity is such a possibility.²²

Dr. Ramakrishna Rao believes that he has solved the problem which has been eluding the attempts of so many advaitins. But we shall not go into the merits of his solution, for our aim in mentioning his argument is different. Our aim is to show that the argument has been developed out of Sri Aurobindo's logic. It is so self-evident that it does not need any proof. Like Radhakrishnan, he does not give credit to Sri Aurobindo for what he has borrowed from him. However, it is needless to say that he has succumbed to Sri Aurobindo's ideas.

Decisive Swing towards Sri Aurobindo

Of the three responses, the last one is perhaps more than a response, it is a decisive swing towards Sri Aurobindo's ideas. As for the other two, the impact may be very powerful, but it is not substantial in the sense that the original metaphysical content of our culture has not undergone any radical change. In the case of the third it looks as if our cultural consciousness has come very nearly to a point of emancipating itself from the crippling ideas of Shankara's negative metaphysics and remoulding itself in terms of the more comprehensive and affirmative ideas of Sri Aurobindo. No metaphysics can ever survive if its survival depends on the logic of another metaphysics. If a metaphysics were to do so, it would mean it should soon give place to the other which supplied the logical principle.

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

NOTES

- ¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1958, p. 70.
 - ² S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1953, p. 554.
 - ³ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1972, p. 231.
 - ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.
 - ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.
 - ^{6,7} *Ibid.*, p. 263.
 - ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.
 - ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 144.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 144.
 - ¹³ *The Principal Upanishads*, p. 64.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.
 - ¹⁵ *The Life Divine*, p. 338.
 - ¹⁶ G.R. Malkani, *Mayavada: Shankara and Sri Aurobindo*, The Indian Philosophy Congress, 1950, p. 4.
 - ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 - ¹⁸ K.B. Ramakrishna Rao, *Advaita as Philosophy and Religion*, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1969, p. 61.
 - ¹⁹ *The Life Divine*, p. 333.
 - ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 344.
 - ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 333.
 - ²² *Advaita as Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 57-59.
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THE PASSING AND THE PERMANENT

A STORY FROM THE JAIN KATHANUYOGA

ILACHIKUMAR was the son of a Nagarsheth (Mayor of a city). He was a well-built youth, handsome and well-versed in all the seventy-two arts prescribed for a man. He was self-confident and always got whatever he wanted. He never knew what "No" was. Many parents of young girls, offered their daughters to Ilachikumar, but he was not satisfied with anyone. So whenever a girl was shown to him, his answer was always a refusal.

Ilachi's parents also insisted that he should choose a girl for marriage, but his reply was, "Love should well up in my heart at first sight. How can I marry a girl if it does not? Please don't insist. I shall myself tell you when I want to marry." Thus the matter was left there.

Some months passed and the fated day came. Ilachi was going to his shop. On the road some jugglers were playing and the chief juggler's daughter was beating the drum. On seeing her, Ilachi's heart welled up with love and he decided then and there that he would marry her. He was so cocksure of his success that he never dreamt of a possible "No" from the juggler or his own parents.

At noon, when Ilachi was with his parents, he said to his father, "Well, Dad, I have decided to marry." On hearing this, Ilachi's parents were overjoyed. Little did they realise that their joy would be evanescent.

Ilachi's father said, "I am delighted. Who is the fortunate girl?" Ilachi replied, "I have chosen a juggler's daughter as my bride." The parents were shocked. It was as if a thunderbolt had struck them. For some time they could not speak. At last the father said, "What nonsense are you talking? Have you lost your brain? A juggler's daughter for the son of a Nagarsheth? Talk some sense. I cannot allow you to marry a juggler's daughter. There are many girls in our community. Select any and I will get you married to that girl even if we do not like her. I cannot permit you to marry a juggler's daughter, much less could your mother and I take part in such a marriage."

But Ilachi was very firm in his choice. He replied with all the firmness that he could command, "Dad, I have chosen the girl of my heart; don't try to persuade me that I am wrong. Love welled up on seeing the girl and I am bent on marrying her and her alone, whatever happens."

At these words his father became angry and exclaimed, "What about our reputation? our caste? our creed? Do you mean that we should let go all these things for a juggler's girl? It shall never happen in my life." And as a threat he added, "If you insist on marrying that girl, take it as final that our relations will come to an end." But Ilachi was resolute and replied, "I am going this very night to the chief of the jugglers to arrange marriage between myself and his daughter."

Evening came, followed by night, and Ilachi set off on his mission. He could not even dream that his suit might be rejected. What more could a juggler want than

having as his son-in-law a Nagarsheth's son? And he was prepared to pay the price whatever it might be. He also thought of the warm welcome that he would receive in the juggler's camp and the sensation that would be created by his proposal.

Ilachi came near the juggler's camp. Some two or three persons were sitting outside the place. Ilachi said to one of them, "Tell your chief that Ilachi, son of the Nagarsheth, has come to see you." The man went inside, came out after some time and said, "Our chief is busy at present, he cannot see you for half an hour. Please wait." Ilachi received the first shock of his life here. He, a Nagarsheth's son, asked to wait and that too by a juggler! But there was no go for him except to wait. Reluctantly he waited.

After half an hour, he was called in and when he was brought before the chief, the chief simply said, "Well?" Ilachi replied, "I am the Nagarsheth's son Ilachi." Said the chief, "May be." He did not even ask why he had come. So silence reigned. Then Ilachi announced, "I have come with a proposal." "And what may it be?" questioned the chief. Ilachi answered, "I have come to ask your daughter's hand in marriage."

When the chief heard this, he said, "Eh! What? My daughter's hand in marriage with you? What nonsense! May I know what qualifies you as my daughter's husband?" Ilachi talked of his high birth, his riches, his youth and said that he was prepared to pay whatever price was demanded. The chief laughed, saying, "Don't try to tempt me by these high words. We may be poor, but at the same time we have self-respect. Talk of these things, which you boast of, to persons like yourself. We believe in labour. You are not fit to be my daughter's husband and my daughter is not a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder."

Ilachi remonstrated, "On seeing your daughter, love has welled up in my heart and I have chosen her as my bride. I want her as my wife; name your conditions and I will fulfil them to the letter."

The chief replied, "You want to know on what conditions you can have my daughter as your wife? Then here are the conditions.

"1. You shall have to give up your parents, your family, your riches, your religion and become one of us.

"2. You shall beg food from door to door as we do.

"3. You shall have to move before the audience with a cap in hand and beg for donations.

"4. You shall have to learn all our arts, which will take at least five to six years.

"5. After you have mastered the arts, your first performance will be before a king and if the king is pleased with your performance, then and not before then can you have my daughter as your wife, but till then, during that period, you shall not lift even your eyelashes towards my daughter.

"These are the conditions. Go home, ponder over them and, if they are acceptable to you, come tomorrow and be one of us."

Said Ilachi, "I have nothing to ponder over. I have made my choice. All your

conditions are acceptable to me. Give me pen and paper that I may inform my parents about my choice and be one of you from this very moment."

The chief was amazed at the readiness of Ilachi to give up everything without regret. Pen and paper were given to Ilachi as demanded by him. He wrote to his father:

"Dad, this note will be a great shock to you, but I have decided to give up my family, caste, religion, reputation, willingly with a joy in my heart, so that I may marry the girl of my choice. Please forget me and forgive me."

From the next day Ilachi began to learn the juggler's tricks and he was bent upon achieving his object within a short time. So he used every moment to learn the juggler's arts and mastered within a year what would ordinarily take five to six years. And it was decided that Ilachi's first performance should be before the King of Benatat City.

So all moved to Benatat and the King was duly informed of the jugglers' arrival.

A day was fixed for the performance. The big day arrived and the jugglers came to the wide *maidān*—large open space—where the performance was to be enacted.

A rope was hung above the ground at a height of 32 feet and Ilachi was to give his performance on that rope.

In due time the King arrived with his retinue and when all were seated the bugle sounded and Ilachi went up the rope and the juggler's daughter began to beat the drum.

Ilachi started his performance, one feat after another, each succeeding one more amazing than the previous; but the King did not give any sign of approval. People who had gathered wondered at the King's silence. Something had happened to the King. Something had distracted his mind and that something was the beauty of the juggler's daughter. The King was gloating over her beauty and he had forgotten to see Ilachi's performances. The only idea that occupied his mind was, "How to get the juggler's daughter into my bedroom?" The King wished that Ilachi might miss a step and fall down and die.

In this way time passed. Here was Ilachi giving performances increasingly amazing. Here was the King full of thoughts about the juggler's daughter and wishing Ilachi's death.

Now it was 8 a.m. of the next day's morning. Still there was no sign of approval from the King and till then the performances could not stop.

The people and even Ilachi divined the mind of the King. At this moment Ilachi saw something which gave a new turn to things. What did he see? He saw the top room of a building. In the room two persons were alone. One was a young Jain sadhu aged about twenty-five, and the other was a damsel of exquisite beauty aged about twenty. The damsel was insisting that the sadhu should take this thing and that thing and she was fixing her gaze on the sadhu's face to see his reaction. The sadhu's eyes were glued to the floor and never even for a fraction of a second did he raise them towards the damsel, though they were alone.

This scene became the cause of a reversal of consciousness in Ilachi.

He said to himself, "See, Ilachi! here is a young sadhu and an alluring woman alone, still the sadhu does not lift even an eyelash. Think what you have done for a juggler's daughter. You have given up your parents, your reputation, your riches, your religion for her and now the King wishes that you should die, so that he may have her. Fie on you!"

In this way Ilachi began to introspect and retrospect and soared up from one high level of consciousness to another higher level and realised the falsity of human relations and also his own true being. He reached a point where all his Karmas were exhausted and he attained *Kevaljñāna*—knowledge of the Eternal.

This event was proclaimed by the gods by beat of drum. That reversal of consciousness in Ilachi also produced a similar reversal of consciousness in the juggler's daughter. She also attained *Kevaljñāna*. And there was nothing left for the King.

VALLABH SHETH

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BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Longings for the Mother. By *Indra Sen*. Published by the author. Rs. 3.

THERE have been a lot of things written about the Mother since her passing. *Longings for the Mother* is one of few that are worth reading. The word “psychic” is not one I like to throw around loosely. It means, in Sri Aurobindo’s terminology, that which pertains to or originates from the psychic being, the soul. Indra Sen’s ten “longings” all have the psychic imprint.

There are not many examples of soul-aspiration in English literature. Most “devotional” writings in the language are either religious formulas or philosophical speculations. Where passion enters in, it is just that—vital demand. *Longings for the Mother* is weighted down by neither the mental nor the vital defect. All ten pieces are charged with that spirit of true devotion, *bhakti*, which is India’s gift to the world’s spiritual literature. And such literature is not mere words on paper. It has always a power of realisation.

This is not to say that these meditations of Indra Sen are free from all admixture not of mental stuff. The intellectual stamp is very noticeable in the later pieces, and it is not absent from any of them. But this is to be expected when the author is a trained philosopher. What is remarkable is that the mental impression is rarely heavy enough to be a defect, and is often a positive addition. Sri Aurobindo speaks of the true mental being—a mind under the influence of the awakened soul. It is this enlightened and consecrated mental instrument that is often expressing itself here. Yet it is not the mind that is the principal speaker, but the soul itself:

And we wish to live and act as would please her. Her pleasure is our goal. This is the very voice of the psychic being. Its statement can be bare, almost plain, as above, or it can swell to a fullness of utterance almost poetic:

“As Thou willst, As Thou willst” is the refrain. And it is so rewarding, Mother. It gives a contact with Thee. I feel so peaceful and assured and equal to every call of action. I am clear and sure and move on in life in utter confidence.

“As Thou willst, As Thou willst” is as sweet as a song and I sing it again and again. And as I sing it, the heart throbs more joyously and I feel free from all care and anxiety. All calculations, all pros and cons, all this and that, all manipulations of particulars drop and I live in the unconditioned, the limitless, the infinite and the absolute. I am free and large and wide and above all this finite multiplicity and, as it were, a master of it. . . .

Indra Sen’s prose has often a refreshing down-to-earthness. The soul reaches for words that are brief and direct to clothe best its “naked primal need”:

I long for Thee as I do for nothing else. I desire lots of things, strive and struggle for them, am happy when I get them, am disappointed when I don’t. But I long for Thee from deep within and the more I long the happier I feel. The longing itself is completely satisfying. There is no question of getting or

not getting anything. . . .

The passages quoted above are from the first three pieces in the book. These without doubt are the best of the ten—which is to say (for qualitative ranking is out of place here) the ones in which the psychic influence is most apparent. As the originating afflatus is spent, the mind reasserts itself. In the pivotal piece (the fifth) the author expresses this mind-soul dichotomy:

But the elements of separation persist and at times turn up rather obtrusively. Then I live as though out of joint, in imbalance, ill-at-ease and must immediately struggle to get into the balance of wide ease, inner solace and Your deep and felt Presence.

Hereafter mental questionings predominate. And when the author asks: "Mother, will you come again in a new body?" and begins to thumb reflectively through old copies of the *Bulletin*, he sinks almost to the level of that writing we have become so used to lately—those all-but-religious speculations about subjects none of us know anything about. The author's language even becomes a little contrived—a premonition of the kind of prose the author indulges in when he becomes preoccupied with spiritual pamphleteering.

But *Longings for the Mother* never falls to such a level. There is always the saving psychic touch. The book's total effect is fine, warm, inspiring. Where best it is rare and memorable and—the superlative is here justified—magnificent.

The printing and get-up are adequate. The price of Rs. 3 could hardly cover the cost. The book is a gift of a lover of the Mother to all those who love her and long for her.

PETER HEEHS

*

Thus Sang my Soul (Part One)—Story of a Soul from Aspiration to Realisation—by *Har Krishan Singh*. Published by Har Krishan Singh, 16 Rue Saint Louis, Pondicherry-605001. Price Rs. 12.20.

This is a book of exactly a hundred long and short poems by Har Krishan Singh on the Mother's Birth Centenary—one of the books which are being published by him for the great occasion.

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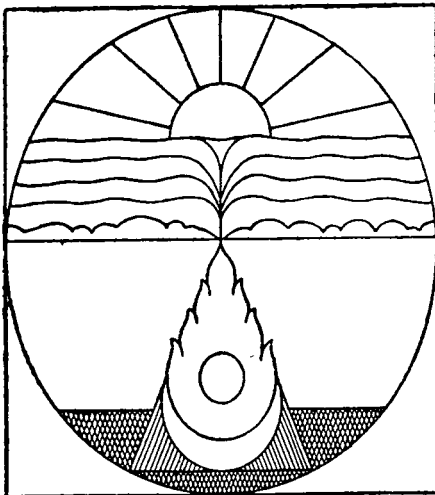
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EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(21)

If you happen to be sending a letter to London, with an address that ends in W.I. you can rest assured that you are sending it to the most aristocratic and posh locality in London. And if your English friend tells you that he was christened or married in St. George's, Hanover Square, you can take it for granted that he belongs to a family with the bluest blood in England. Mayfair, the fairy town within London, is the most fashionable and rich residential quarter in the Metropolis. Here you will find some of the wealthiest men in the world, and the greatest beauties and highest talents: in the words of Sydney Smith, "more intelligence, human ability, to say nothing of wealth and beauty than the world ever collected in so small a space before." The story of how Mayfair came into existence and its growth is as fascinating as any fairytale and as gripping as any detective story.

If you draw a line north-south, say, from Highgate to Charing Cross, the area directly west of this line is Mayfair. The very first street you come across is Regent Street. You can wander through Mayfair till you come to Park Lane which divides Mayfair from Hyde Park. The southern boundary is Picadilly, and the northernmost limit is Oxford Street. The streets just mentioned and the area within their boundaries are the realm of the highbrows. So late as the early 17th century this whole place was rolling hills and emerald fields and farmland. A fair was held here every summer in early May, to the delight of common people after the rigours of the winter. It used to be a colourful and gay assembly, with shops and boutiques and games and other entertainments to draw the crowd. But the more aristocratic part of the community did not very much like the whole affair. And Queen Anne positively disliked it, for the noise of the revelry that went on all night reached her home, St. James Palace, half a mile away. This Mayfair stopped with the spread of Puritanism. Soon it became outdated, for there were by now other outlets and diversions for the Londoners.

How did the area come to be known as Mayfair? All of it belonged to two families, the Grosvenors and the Berkeleys. As the rich people were building more and more houses outside London after the Great Fire, both Sir Richard Grosvenor and Lady Berkeley were inclined to dispose of part of their property, for selling land became very lucrative if one had any. Sir Richard had inherited his vast property from his mother, Mary Davies, whose father was bent upon marrying his daughter into one of the aristocratic families, preferably the Berkeleys. There was a hitch. Finally he found his ideal son-in-law in Sir Richard Grosvenor the elder. Mary Davies was then a girl of thirteen. Her son Sir Richard Grosvenor and Lady Berkeley were great planners. They did not want to sell their land in any haphazard manner. They planned

a whole township in their respective areas, with Roads and Streets and Squares and houses, according to their ideas, so much so that the people who bought their land had to comply with their taste and wishes, at least to some extent. The result is what we see today: beautiful Squares with gardens and Plane trees some two hundred years old, straight roads lined with imposing houses. The alignment of a road was very important to them: from one end to the other nothing ugly or jarring should mar the view. Something pleasing or a church steeple invariably met our eyes. Among the Squares, Grosvenor Square, Berkeley Square and Hanover Square are the most important ones. Sir Richard Grosvenor is still held in great esteem and remembered as the Great Builder.

Around these Squares and the streets that run criss-cross through Mayfair rose up mansions on which fabulous sums were spent. Devonshire House, Lansdowne House and Dorchester House were looked upon in those days as veritable institutions. The staircase alone of Devonshire House cost thirty thousand pounds sterling. And we are told that the two front rooms of Lansdowne House, decorated by Robert Adam, were transported to America recently. The drawing room of the same house with its decorations by Cipriani Zucchi and Perfetti has been reconstructed in the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in Philadelphia. And the dining room has been taken over bodily to the Metropolitan Museum, New York. This is just to show how unique and priceless the mansions and their interior decorations were, so much so that even foreign museums would care to buy them at fabulous prices and set them up as exhibition pieces in their own country. The house was bought by Gordon Selfridge, an American multimillionaire who opened his world-famous store here. Even today entering Selfridge's is like entering a palace.

About Grosvenor Square Arthur Dascent writes: "strewn with the strawberry leaves and blue ribbons of the Garter." The entire west side of Grosvenor Square is the American Embassy today. It is a stately building all white and gold with a huge eagle on its front façade. It is a comparatively new structure. Originally, the United States had its Embassy elsewhere. John Adams was the first American Minister in the Court of St. James. He and the later Ambassadors had a meagre allowance and lived modestly. It was Joseph Kennedy, father of President Kennedy, who first complained that things were not at all befitting the great nation. So started the move to give the Embassy of the United States an impressive face-lift.

It is amazing how some people in London (the more educated class) are interested in their city. They would even undertake research work at great length to obtain detailed information about their Metropolis. Londoners are proud of their city. For example, in Grosvenor Square, among the groves of Plane trees there is an imposing statue of President Roosevelt, unveiled by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1948 in the presence of King George VI. To make way for the statue and its own little garden sixty-five Plane trees some two hundred years old had to be felled. The old residents were appalled. But without Roosevelt there may have been no Mayfair left at all—Hitler would have bombed it out of existence. Old residents of any place are inclined to

become over-sensitive about their own locality. There is a story that about the year 1807, gas lights were introduced on the Pall Mall. Someone suggested, why not have them in Mayfair also? The local residents flatly refused as they thought this was something vulgar; they preferred their flambeaux. About this incident Tom Moore writes:

Where, far too stately and sublime
To profit by the lights of Time,
Let intellect march how it will,
They stick to oil and Watchmen still.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA & SANAT K. BANERJI

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL FORTY-FIRST SEMINAR

In Celebration of the Mother's Birth Centenary

18th-19th February 1978

(Continued from the issue of January 1979)

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT FROM THE MOTHER

Speech by Hemant Habbu

HAVING lived in the Ashram since my early childhood, I have imbibed spontaneously its atmosphere charged with the Mother's Light and Love and Divine Presence. The imbibing of this atmosphere is itself perhaps the best way of learning what the Mother teaches us, for it leads to our true growth and development. But how can one speak of this process which is so spontaneous?

However, I may mention one thing which I have learnt from her to do consciously and attentively, because she herself has recommended it so specifically. It is to read Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* which, according to her, is one of the most powerful means of spiritual growth. As she herself advised a young sadhak:

"My child, every day you are going to read *Savitri*; read properly, with the right attitude, concentrating a little before opening the pages and trying to keep the mind as empty as possible, absolutely without a thought. The direct road is through the heart. I tell you, if you try to really concentrate with this aspiration you can light the flame, the psychic flame, the flame of purification in a very short time, perhaps in a few days. What you cannot do normally, you can do with the help of *Savitri*. Try and you will see how very different it is, how new, if you read with this attitude, with this something at the back of your consciousness; as if it were an offering to Sri Aurobindo. You know it is charged, fully charged with consciousness; as if *Savitri* were a being, a real guide. I tell you, whoever, wanting to practise Yoga, tries sincerely and feels the necessity for it, will be able to climb with the help of *Savitri* to the highest rung of the ladder of Yoga, will be able to find the secret that *Savitri* represents. And this without the help of a Guru. And he will be able to practise it anywhere. For him *Savitri* alone will be the guide, for all that he needs he will find in *Savitri*. If he remains very quiet when before a difficulty, or when he does not know where to turn to go forward and how to overcome obstacles, for all these hesitations and these incertitudes which overwhelm us at every moment, he will have the neces-

sary indications, and the necessary concrete help. If he remains very calm, open, if he aspires sincerely, always he will be as if led by the hand. If he has faith, the will to give himself and essential sincerity he will reach the final goal.

“Indeed, *Savitri* is something concrete, living, it is all replete, packed with consciousness, it is the supreme knowledge above all human philosophies and religions. It is the spiritual path, it is Yoga, Tapasya, Sadhana, everything, in its single body. *Savitri* has an extraordinary power, it gives out vibrations for him who can receive them, the true vibrations of each stage of consciousness. It is incomparable, it is truth in its plenitude, the Truth Sri Aurobindo brought down on the earth. My child, one must try to find the secret that *Savitri* represents, the prophetic message Sri Aurobindo reveals there for us. This is the work before you, it is hard but it is worth the trouble.”¹

Following this direction, I have learnt to read *Savitri* with care and concentration.

Here I shall read three passages from it which I have found most helpful because they relate to the Mother herself and her divine mission. I would like to share my joy with you by reading them out to you.

(I)

“A day may come when she must stand unhelped
 On a dangerous brink of the world’s doom and hers,
 Carrying the world’s future on her lonely breast,
 Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
 To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge.
 Alone with death and close to extinction’s edge,
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In the tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world’s fate,
 In her soul’s climbing beyond mortal time
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink,
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.
 No human aid can reach her in that hour,
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.
 Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
 For this the silent Force came missioned down;

¹ *Sweet Mother—Harmones of Light*, Words Recorded by Mona Sarkar (1978), pp. 30-32.

In her the conscious Will took human shape:
She only can save herself and save the world.”¹

(2)

“I am charged by God to do his mighty work,
Uncaring I serve his will who sent me forth,
Reckless of peril and earthly consequence.
I reason not of virtue and of sin
But do the deed he has put into my heart.
I fear not for the angry frown of Heaven,
I flinch not from the red assault of Hell;
I crush the opposition of the gods,
Tread down a million goblin obstacles.
I guide man to the path of the Divine
And guard him from the red Wolf and the Snake.
I set in his mortal hand my heavenly sword
And put on him the breastplate of the gods.
I break the ignorant pride of human mind
And lead the thought to the wideness of the Truth;
I rend man’s narrow and successful life
And force his sorrowful eyes to gaze at the sun
That he may die to earth and live in his soul.
I know the goal, I know the secret route:
I have studied the map of the invisible worlds;
I am the battle’s head, the journey’s star.
But the great obstinate world resists my word
And the crookedness and evil in man’s heart
Is stronger than Reason, profounder than the Pit,
And the malignancy of hostile Powers
Puts craftily back the clock of destiny
And mightier seems than the eternal Will.
The cosmic evil is too deep to unroot:
The cosmic suffering is too vast to heal.
A few I guide who pass me towards the Light;
A few I save, the mass falls back unsaved;
A few I help, the many strive and fail:
But my heart I have hardened and I do my work:
Slowly the Light grows greater in the East,
Slowly the world progresses on God’s road.
His seal is on my task, it cannot fail;

¹ *Savitri* (Cent. Ed., Vol. 29), Book VI, Canto 2, p. 461.

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

I shall hear the silver swing of heaven's gates
When God comes out to meet the soul of the world."¹

(3)

"If this is she of whom the world has heard,
Wonder no more at any happy change.
Each easy miracle of felicity
Of her transmuting heart the alchemy is."²

Compiled by KISHOR GAND.

MAN AND WOMAN

(Continued)

MENTAL TRAINING

IN MODERN times the world has witnessed several great women, who have shown remarkable mental qualities and organising capacities. But we need such women in hundreds and thousands to uplift their kind and put them on an equal footing with men. As the Mother said nearly 60 years ago:

“Certainly if women wish to take the place they claim in the governing of nations they must progress much further in the mastery of self, the broadening of ideas and points of view, in intellectual suppleness and oblivion of their sentimental preferences in order to become worthy.”

“Doubtless, women’s politics would bring about a tendency to disinterestedness and more humanitarian solutions. But, fortunately, in their present state women in general are creatures of passion and enthusiastic partisanship; they lack the reasoning calm that purely intellectual activity gives; the latter is undoubtedly dangerous because hard and cold and pitiless, nevertheless it is unquestionably useful to mastering the overflow of sentiment which cannot hold a predominant place in the ruling of collective interests.”

Due to the place given to eastern women—to look after the household and bring up children—they have been deprived of the free use of their mental and reasoning capacities. They are more governed by heart and vital sentiments; and reason hardly finds much play in deciding their actions. Duty to family, respect for elders, love and affection for the young ones are the qualities ingrained in a woman’s mode of behaviour. She is hardly given much scope to take a lead in making decisions concerning even her own life, such as her education, her marriage, etc. Few women have escaped totally from this imposition of decision by elders. Even the so-called highly educated and modern women rarely get a chance to take vital decisions in their lives by themselves alone. Woman has been afforded so much over-protection that she has been treated almost like a child or an imbecile creature who has no brains to think and choose her way of life. Now if women have really to come out of their homes and shoulder responsibilities of business, social life and governing of States and stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers then they will have to learn to use reason and make it their guiding factor in taking vital decisions. For neither governments nor society nor business can be run by sentiments alone, however rich and noble these may be.

Reason alone can help woman to become fit to play her newly discovered and most important role in public-affairs. The moment a woman decides to step out of the life of the four walls of her home, she will need to learn to discriminate, observe, decide, take a total view of a given problem, if she wants to face life boldly.

Life within the house is very much protected and smooth but life outside it is filled with hazards and temptations. Before she is able to make full use of her newly won freedom, she will have to undergo a strict mental discipline and prove herself worthy of her new responsibilities. Side by side with physical training, mental education will have to be intensified. Women will have to learn to control their sentiments and emotions which have often found free play and even earned women a good name. Life outside is quite hard and packed with struggles in which cold reason in place of rich emotions often helps to succeed.

But this does not mean that women will have to become devoid of warm sentiments. In fact they will have to blend reason with emotion in such a way as to make proper use of both. For women will be losers if they are to deprive themselves of the richness of the heart's qualities. Reason is not all, the heart is essential, for, without it women will become brute machines, as some men are. That will be a tremendous loss to society and the world at large.

Woman is known for her love and tender care, which should be enriched with the assistance from reason, but not nipped in the bud by cold rationality. Women will have to grow strong physically as well as mentally without losing any of her special qualities, for humanity still needs the warmth of love and tender care of a mother. Essentially, woman is a mother and she cannot sacrifice her motherly qualities to compete with man. It is only in this one field that man can never be her equal.

Women's physical education and mental training will remain incomplete if she is not brought up in a free and fearless atmosphere. The first five years of a child's life make or mar an individual, whether man or woman. Hence if we want to create healthy, reasonable and mentally developed women, we will have to catch them young and train them properly. Fear is something very corrosive; it makes a person's life miserable. One, who grows up in fear, can never completely get rid of it throughout his whole life. So the teachers and specially mothers will do well to transmit fearlessness to their children and students. Modern woman, however qualified and physically strong she may appear to be, is in the depth of her heart still afraid of man's strength and his intellectual power.

We are not suggesting that she should not respect man, but our objection is that she should not become frightened before a man, just because she is a woman. For if from childhood boys and girls grow together as they are doing now-a-days at many places, then they will have mutual love and respect for each other, but the element of fear has no reason to creep into the relation between a man and a woman. A girl, who is given sufficient training and full opportunities to grow into a healthy, strong, fearless and intellectually developed woman, will be in a better position to fulfil the responsibilities that future society is going to expect from her. For, it is the woman of today who is going to create the future world of tomorrow—a new world full of peace, harmony and love.

(To be continued)

PUSHPA A.